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TREATISE
OF THE
DOMINION
OF
Sin and Grace,

Wherein Sin's Reign is discovered, in whom it is, and in whom it is not: How the Law supports it: How Grace delivers from it, by setting up its Dominion in the Heart.

Rom. vi. 14. *For Sin shall not have Dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law but under Grace.*

By the late Pious and Learned Minister of the Gospel *John Owen*, D. D.

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TO THE

SERIOUS READER.

ONE of the great Goſpel Enquiries that a Chriſtian ought to be moſt *critical* and *curious* in reſolving to himſelf, upon the moſt *impartial Examination* of his own Heart, concerning his ſpiritual State, and ſtanding in Grace, is, *Whether he be in the Faith or no?* which doubt can be reſolved but Two ways, either by *Faith it ſelf*, cloſing with its true Objects as offered in the Goſpel in its *direct act*; and ſo it evidenceth it ſelf, being the Evidence of things not ſeen, as all the natural Senſes Evidence themſelves by their own Acts upon their proper Objects: For he that ſees the Sun, hath Argument enough to himſelf, That he is not blind, but hath a ſeeing Eye, and Faith, therefore is frequently repreſented to us by ſeeing as *John* vi. 40. and elſewhere; which Evidence is according to the degrees of Faith, weaker or ſtronger,

and hence carries leſſer or greater aſſurances with it; but ſuch as are of the higheſt and beſt nature, giving the greateſt Glory to the *Grace* and *Truth* of God, and the firmeſt ſtay to the Soul in the greateſt Storms of Temptation, being as an *Anchor faſtened within the Vail* ſure and ſtedfaſt. Or elſe additionally, *that our joy may be full*; and, for further confirmation, eſpecially in ſuch Caſes wherein our Faith ſeems to fail us, and we are like *Thomas*, God hath out of his abundant Grace in the Goſpel provided Arguments for us to raiſe from *ſpiritual ſence*, to judge of our *State and Standing* by. But this requires the teachings of the Spirit, and thence a *Spirit of diſcerning*, Experience of, and inſight into our own Hearts and ways, *with ſenſes exerciſed by reaſon of uſe*, that theſe Grounds and Arguments may be matter of Comfort and Eſtabliſhment unto us.

I call theſe latter Evidences, *ſubordinate* ones, and *additional* to that of Faith, of great uſe by way of Eſtabliſhment and Confirmation unto Believers, provided they be not abuſed to ſole reſting and reliance upon them, to the great prejudice of our Life, of Faith, for *we live by Faith*

(ſo

(ſo muſt all repenting Sinners when they have attained to the higheſt pitch of Holineſs in this Life) *and not by Senſe*, no not ſpiritual Senſe; it's a good *Hand-Maid* to Faith, but no good *Miſtreſs* to it.

MOREOVER Trials of this nature are often of a marvellous awakening, and convincing nature unto poor ſecure Sinners, formal and hypocritical Profeſſors, for many of them hold true with great demonſtration in the Negative, 1 *Joh.* iij. 14. *He that loveth not his Brother, abideth in Death.* And *v.* 10. *In this the Children of God and the Children of the Devil are manifeſt, whoſoever doth not Righteouſneſs is not of God, neither he that loveth not his Brother.* Now theſe *Teſts* come upon an unregenerate Man, as clear and ſtrong Convictions of his *undone Eſtate*, when by Goſpel Light ſhining into his dark Heart, it Evidently appears, that there is a *Total Abſence* of ſuch eminent Graces, that are inſeparable from a Child of God; but when a poor broken-hearted, ſelf-condemning Sinner comes to try himſelf by theſe Teſts, eſpecially under great Temptation, he chargeth all that he finds in himſelf for *Hypocriſy*,

criſy, *Formality* and *Sin*, ſits altogether in darkneſs in reſpect of thoſe *ſparks of internal Light*, and is fain at laſt when he hath broken all his Flints, and worn out all his Steel, in compaſſing himſelf about with ſparks of his own kindling, to turn unto Chriſt by Faith, *as a Priſoner of Hope, believing in Hope againſt Hope*; and from him to fetch by a direct act of Faith, as from the *Sun* of Righteouſneſs, all his *Light* of Life and Comfort, and then he will be able to light all his ſmall Tapers, yea all inferiour Arguments of his good Eſtate will, flow in with much enlargement, and increaſe of Conſolation. As *Streams of living Water* flowing forth of the *Fountain*, *ſet open* for *Sin* and for *Uncleanneſs*, into *the Belly of the true Believing Sinner*, receiving by Faith of the fulneſs of Chriſt through the Spirit, abundantly ſupplying him with Rivers of true ſubſtantial *living Graces and Conſolations, being filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, to the Praiſe and Glory of Chriſt.*

NOW among diſquiſitions of this latter Nature and Uſe, this is none of the leaſt, *Whether we are under the Dominion of Sin or no?* Either we are or are not; if we are, our State is moſt certainly dangerous;

dangerous; for ſuch are under the Law, and the Law *hath concluded all under Wrath.* If we are not under Sin's Dominion, we are in a bleſſed and happy Eſtate, being *under Grace*; for theſe two Dominions divide the World, and every Son and Daughter of *Adam* is under one or the other, and none can be under both at the ſame time. Now our being under Grace can be no way better Evidenced than by our *being in Chriſt by Faith*, for he that is ſo is a *new Creature*, is *paſſed from Death to Life*, will ſtill be mortifying Sin, the *ſtrong Man* in Sin's Dominion being caſt out, and therefore Faith is ſaid to be our *Victory*, through the ſupply of all Grace received from Jeſus Chriſt. Indeed it calls for no ſmall ſpiritual Skill and Underſtanding to paſs aright judgment in theſe Matters: Undoubtedly many are deceived in taking wrong Meaſures to ſearch out theſe deep things of God, taking them to belong to the mere *Faculties* and *Endowments* of a natural Man, not conſidering that they are of the *Spirits Revelation* only: And hence it is that many poor Creatures in a *Bondage State* under the Law, and therefore under *Sin's Dominion*, do work like

Slaves

Slaves in the Dunghil of their own Hearts, to find out ſome natural Religion or moral Goodneſs in themſelves, to recommend them unto God; but ſuch recommendation muſt be under the Law, it cannot be under Grace; and therefore ſuch are under the Dominion of Sin infallibly as the *Iſraelites* were, *which followed after the Law of Righteouſneſs but attained not unto the Law of Righteouſneſs. Wherefore, becauſe they ſought it not by Faith, but as it were by the works of the Law,* for *they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling Stone,* Rom. ix. 32. And it is greatly to be bewailed, that many Profeſſors that ſit under the means of Grace, are ſo tender of their ſecure and palliated Conſciences, that they cannot indure that the Rays of *true Goſpel Light* ſhould ſhine directly into their Hearts, being contented *with a name only, that they do live*; they are loath to come to any narrow ſearch or trial, leaſt they ſhould be found out and appear to themſelves in their ugly ſhapes, whilſt they are willing that all the World ſhould have a good Opinion of them, under which they cannot admit of any inward diſturbances, but deſire to ſleep in a whole Skin.

OTHERS

To the Serious READER.

OTHERS there are, ſincere, broken-hearted Believers, ſcared at the *Rock of Preſumption*, on which they ſee ſo many Profeſſors wracked daily, are apt to fall upon the other Extream, and too wrongfully, to free Grace, condemn themſelves, *as being under the Dominion of Sin*, and therefore cenſure themſelves to be under *the Law and Wrath*, notwithſtanding all their ſeeming Faith and Holineſs, calling that *Preſumption* and this *Hypocriſy*: Hence returning to a kind of *Spirit of Bondage again to fear*, their Faith is ſhaken by prevailing Unbelief, their Peace is broken, and all Goſpel Ordinances rendred ineffectual, as to their true Ends of profit, Edification and Comfort. Hence, though they are truly under Grace, they do not know, or rather through Temptation, will not acknowledge it, *but go mourning all the day long, becauſe of the Oppreſſor, and the Enemy*: But I beſeech ſuch a poor Soul to conſider a little, and not *to receive the Grace of God in vain*, doſt thou groan under the *Uſurpation and Oppreſſion* of remaining Sin, and is this the Dominion of it? Is there no difference between *Sin's Dominion, and Sin's Tyranny and Uſurpation*? Dominion is upon account of right of Conqueſt,

queſt, or ſubjection, there is upon both that Sin reigns in, carnal and unregenerate Men, *who yield up their Members as inſtruments of Unrighteouſneſs unto Sin, but you reckon your ſelves dead unto Sin*, having no joy in its prevalency but grief, being *planted* in this reſpect, *in the likeneſs of Chriſt's Death, who died unto Sin once, but dieth no more. Sin ſhall have no more Dominion over him*; *likewiſe reckon ye alſo your ſelves dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, i. e. To be under Grace, to put your ſelf freely and joyfully under the Conduct and Dominion of Jeſus Chriſt, and to keep up a continual fight and oppoſition againſt the prevailing Power of Sin. Indeed Sin will often, as an Out-lying watchful Enemy, make its *aſſaults* and *incurſions* on the beſt of God's Children, as it did on *David*, *Hezekiah*, *Peter*; and though it may make breaches upon them, Sin ſhall not have *a Dominion*, and *ſet up a Throne of Iniquity in their Hearts*. Grace will beat out *Sin's Throne*; for, indeed, the words of this Text, that is, the ſubject of the enſuing Treatiſe, carry the force of a promiſe to the Saints, to animate and encourage them to fight againſt Sin under the

Banner

Banner of our Lord Jesus, the *Captain of our Salvation made perfect through Sufferings*; For *Sin shall not have Dominion*, &c.

IN treating of which Text, this late *Learned and Reverend Author* hath acted the part of a *good Work Man, that rightly divided the Word of God* (as in all his other Writings of the like nature) giving every one their *portion*, as it belongs to them, with so much perspicuity and demonstration, that if (Christian Reader) thou wilt afford a little time and pains to read, meditate, dilate and digest well the Truths here laid before thee, through the blessing of the God of all Grace, thou wilt find much satisfaction, and real spiritual advantage unto thy Soul, either to awaken and recover thee from under the *Dominion of Sin* (the dangerous and palpable *Symptoms* thereof, being here plainly made manifest) or else to discover thy happy estate in being taken from *under the Law*, and brought under the *Dominion of Grace*, whereby thou maist assume great Encouragement to thy self, to proceed more chearfully in *running the Race set before thee.*

IT'S

To the Serious READER.

IT'S enough to say, that the Author hath left his *Encomium* firmly rooted in the minds of all Pious and Learned Men, that are acquainted with his Writings, Polemick or Practical: Yea, his *Renown* will always be great in after Generations among the *Churches* of Christ, and all true Lovers of the great Truths of the Gospel. And that he is the Author of this small Tract is sufficient to recommend it to thy most serious Perusal, taking this assurance, that it was left (among other Writings of great value) thus perfected for the Press by his own hand, and is now by his *worthy Relict* published for the Benefit of others besides her self. I doubt not but thou wilt say, that it will answer the several Lines that hath been drawn in thy Heart, by *Sin or Grace*, as *Face answereth Face in a Glass*, and that this may be the effect of thy Perusal thereof, in order to thy spiritual and eternal Welfare, is the hearty desire and prayer of

Thy unfeigned Well-wisher,

J. C.

THE

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THE

A TREATISE OF THE DOMINION OF Sin and Grace.

Rom. vi. 14. *For Sin ſhall not have Dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law but under Grace.*

CHAP. I.

What Sin is conſiſtent with the State of Grace, and what not. Sins great deſign in all, to obtain Dominion: It hath it in Unbelievers, and contends for it in Believers. The ways by which it acts.

THE *Pſalmiſt* treating with God in Prayer about Sin, acknowledgeth, that there are in all men *unſearchable Errors of Life*, be-

yond all humane underſtanding or comprehenſion; with ſuch daily ſins of Infirmity, as ſtand in need of continual cleanſing and Pardon, *Pſal.* xix. 12. *Who can underſtand his Errors? cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults.* But yet he ſuppoſeth that theſe things are conſiſtent with a ſtate of Grace, and acceptation with God. He had no thought of any *abſolute Perfection* in this Life; of any ſuch condition as ſhould not ſtand in need of continual cleanſing and pardon. Wherefore there are or may be ſuch ſins in Believers, yea many of them, which yet under a due Application unto God, for purifying and pardoning Grace, ſhall neither deprive us of Peace here, nor endanger our Salvation hereafter.

BUT he ſpeaks immediately of another ſort of ſins, which partly from their Nature, or what they are in themſelves; and partly from their Operation and Power, will certainly prove *deſtructive unto the Souls of men* wherever they are. *V.* 13. *Keep back thy Servant alſo from preſumptuous ſins; let them not have dominion over me, then ſhall I be upright, and I ſhall be innocent from the great Tranſgreſſion.*

THIS is the Hinge whereon the whole Cauſe and State of my Soul doth turn. Although

though I am ſubject to many ſins of various ſorts, yet under them all I can and do maintain my Integrity and *Covenant Uprightneſs* in walking with God; and where I fail am kept within the reach of cleanſing and pardoning mercy continually adminiſtred unto my Soul by Jeſus Chriſt. But there is a ſtate of Life in this World wherein *Sin hath dominion over the Soul*; acting it ſelf *preſumptuouſly*, wherewith Integrity and Freedom from condemning guilt are inconſiſtent.

THIS ſtate therefore, which is eternally ruinous unto the ſouls of men, he deprecates with all earneſtneſs, praying to be kept and preſerved from it.

WHAT he there ſo earneſtly prays for, the *Apoſtle in the Words of the Text* promiſeth unto all Believers, by virtue of the Grace of Chriſt Jeſus adminiſtred in the Goſpel. Both the *Prayer* of the Prophet for himſelf, and the *Promiſe* of the Apoſtle in the name of God unto us, do manifeſt of how great importance this Matter is, as we ſhall declare it to be immediately.

THERE are ſome things ſuppoſed or included in theſe words of the Apoſtle. Theſe we muſt firſt a little enquire into, without which we cannot well underſtand

the Truth it ſelf propoſed in them. As,

IT is ſuppoſed, that *Sin doth ſtill abide in and dwell with Believers.* For ſo is the meaning of the words. That ſin which is *in you* ſhall not have *Dominion over you*; that is, none of them who are not ſenſible of it, who groan not to be delivered from it, as the Apoſtle doth, *Rom.* vij. 24. Thoſe who are otherwiſe minded, know neither themſelves, nor what is ſin, nor wherein the Grace of the Goſpel doth conſiſt. There is the *Fleſh* remaining in every one which luſteth againſt the Spirit, *Gal.* v. 17. And it adheres unto all the faculties of our ſouls; whence it is called the *old Man*, *Rom.* 6. 6. *Epheſ.* 4. 22. in oppoſition unto the Renovation of our minds, and all the faculties of them called the *New Man*, or *New Creature* in us. And there is φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς εἰς ἐπιθυμίας, *Rom.* xiij. 14. a continual working and *Proviſion* to fulfil its own Luſts: So that it abides in us in the way of a dying, decaying *Habit*, weakned and impaired; but acting its ſelf in *Inclinations*, *Motions* and *Deſires*, ſuitable unto its Nature.

AS Scripture and Experience concurr herein, ſo a ſuppoſition of it is the only ground of the whole Doctrine of *Evangelical Mor-*

Mortification. That this is a Duty, a Duty incumbent on Believers all the days of their lives, ſuch a Duty as without which they can never perform any other in a due manner; will not be denied by any, but either ſuch as are wholly under the Power of Atheiſtical Blindneſs, or ſuch as, by the fever of ſpiritual Pride, have loſt the Underſtanding of their own miſerable Condition; and ſo lie dreaming about abſolute Perfection. With neither ſort are we at preſent concerned. Now the firſt proper Object of this *Mortification* is this ſin that dwells in *us*. It is the *Fleſh* which is to be mortified, the *old Man* which is to be crucified, the *Luſts of the Fleſh* with all their corrupt Inclinations, Actings, and Motions that are to be deſtroyed, *Rom.* vi. 6. *Gal.* v. 24. *Col.* iij. 1. Unleſs this be well fixed in the mind, we cannot underſtand the greatneſs of the Grace and Privilege here expreſſed.

2. IT is ſuppoſed that this *Sin* which in the remainders of it, ſo abides in Believers, in various degrees, may put forth its Power in them, to *obtain Victory and Dominion* over them. It is firſt ſuppoſed, that it hath this Dominion in ſome, that it doth bear Rule over all Unbelievers, all that are un-

der the Law; and then that it will ſtrive to do the ſame in them that believe, and are under Grace. For affirming that *it ſhall not have Dominion over us*, he grants that it may or doth contend for it, only it ſhall not have *ſucceſs*, it ſhall not prevail. Hence it is ſaid to *fight* and *war* in us, *Rom.* vij. 23. and to *fight againſt our Souls*, 1 Pet. ij. 12. Now it thus fights and wars and contends in us for Dominion; for that is the end of all War: Whatever *fights*, it doth it for *Power* and *Rule*.

THIS therefore is the general deſign of Sin in all its Actings. Theſe Actings are various, according to the variety of Luſts in the minds of men; but its general deſign in them all, is *Dominion*. Where any one is tempted and ſeduced of his own Luſts, as the Apoſtle *James* ſpeaks, be it in a matter never ſo ſmall or ſo unuſual, or the Temptations thereunto may never occurr again; the deſign of ſin lies not in the particular Temptation, but to make it a means to obtain *Dominion* over the Soul. And the conſideration hereof ſhould keep Believers always on their guard againſt all the motions of Sin; though the matter of them ſeem but ſmall, and the occaſions of them ſuch as are not like to return. For the

aim

aim and tendancy of every one of them is *Dominion and Death*, which they will compaſs, if not ſtopt in their Progreſs, as the Apoſtle there declares, *James* i. 14, 15. Believe not its flatteries, *is it not a little one?* this is the *firſt* or ſhall be the *laſt* time: It requires only a little *place* in the Mind and Affections, it ſhall go no farther: Give not place to its urgency and ſolicitations; admit of none of its excuſes or promiſes; it is power over your Souls unto their Ruine that it aims at in all.

3. THERE are two ways in general whereby ſin acts its Power, and aims at the obtaining this *Dominion*, and they are the two only ways whereby any may deſign or attain an unjuſt Dominion; and they are *Deceit* and *Force*; both of which I have fully deſcribed in another Diſcourſe. With reſpect whereunto it is promiſed, that the Lord Chriſt ſhall deliver the Souls of the Poor that cry unto him, from *Deceit and Violence*, Pſal. lxxii. 14.

THESE are the two only ways of obtaining an unjuſt Dominion; and where they are in conjunction, they muſt have a mighty prevalency, and ſuch as will render the Conteſt hazardous. There are few Believers but have found it ſo, at leaſt

in their own apprehenſions; they have been ready to ſay at one time or another, we ſhall one day fall by the hand of this Enemy; and have been forced to cry out unto Jeſus Chriſt for help and ſuccour with no leſs vehemency than the Diſciples did at Sea, when the Ship was covered with Waves, *Lord ſave us, we periſh*, Matth. viij. 24, 25. And ſo they *would do*, did he not come in *ſeaſonably to their ſuccour*, Heb. iv. 18. And herein the Soul hath frequently no leſs Experience of the Power of Chriſt in his Grace, than the Diſciples on their *Out-cry* had of his ſovereign Authority, when he *rebuked the Winds and the Seas, and there was a great Calm.*

THIS Dominion of Sin is that which we have here ſecurity given us againſt: Though it will *abide* in us, though it will *contend* for Rule by Deceit and Force, yet it ſhall not prevail, it ſhall not have the Dominion.

AND this is a Caſe of the higheſt Importance unto us. Our Souls are and muſt be under the Rule of ſome Principle or Law. And from this Rule, our State is determined and denominated. We are either *Servants of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience*

Obedience unto Righteouſneſs, Rom. vi. 16. This is the Subſtance of the Diſcourſe of the Apoſtle in that whole Chapter; namely, that the ſtate of the Soul, as unto life and death eternal, follows the *Conduct and Rule* that we are under. If Sin have the *Dominion*, we are loſt for ever. If it be dethrown'd, we are ſafe. It may tempt, ſeduce and entice, it may fight, war, perplex and diſquiet, it may ſurprize into actual Sin; yet if it *have not the Dominion* in us, we are in a ſtate of Grace and Acceptation with God.

CHAP. II.

The Enquiries for underſtanding the Text propoſed; the firſt ſpoken to: viz. *What is the dominion of Sin, which we are freed from, and diſcharged of by Grace.*

WE ſhall enquire into Three Things from the Words of this Text.

I. *What is that Dominion of Sin*, which we are freed from, and diſcharged of by Grace.

II. *How*

II. *How we may know* whether Sin hath the Dominion in us or no.

III. What is the *Reaſon and Evidence* of the Aſſurance here given us, That Sin ſhall not have Dominion over us; namely, becauſe we are not under the Law, but under Grace.

I. AS unto the firſt of theſe, I ſhall only recount ſome ſuch Properties of it, as will diſcover its Nature in general; the *particulars* wherein it doth conſiſt, will be conſidered afterwards.

1. THE Dominion of Sin is *perverſe and evil*, and that on both the Accounts which render any Rule or Dominion ſo to be. For,

1. IT is *Uſurped*. Sin hath *no Right* to rule in the Souls of Men. Men have no power to give Sin a *Right* to rule over them. They may voluntarily enſlave themſelves unto it; but this gives Sin no *Right or Title*. All men have originally *another Lord*, unto whom they owe all Obedience; nor can any thing diſcharge them from their Allegiance thereunto: And this is the *Law of God*. The Apoſtle ſaith indeed, that unto whom Men yield themſelves ſervants to obey, his Servants they

are

are to whom they obey, whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteouſneſs, *v.* 19. And ſo it is, men are thereby the proper Servants of Sin; they become ſo by their own voluntary Subjection unto it: But this gives Sin no *Title* againſt the Law of God, whoſe Right alone it is to bear ſway in the ſouls of men. For all that give up themſelves to the ſervice of Sin, do live in actual Rebellion againſt their natural Leige Lord. Hence ſundry things do follow:

Firſt. THE great *Aggravation* of the evil of a ſtate of Sin. Men who live therein, do voluntarily wreſt themſelves, what lieth in them, from under the Rule of the Law of God, and give up themſelves to be ſlaves unto this Tyrant. Could it lay any *claim* to this *Dominion*, had it any *Title* to plead, it were ſome Alleviation of Guilt in them that give up themſelves unto it. But men *yield up themſelves* to the ſlavery of ſin, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks; they reject the Rule of God's Law, and chuſe this foreign yoke, which cannot but be an aggravation of their ſin and miſery. Yet ſo it is, that the greateſt part of men do viſibly and openly profeſs themſelves the ſervants and ſlaves of Sin. They wear its Livery,

Livery, and do all its Drudgery; yea they boaſt themſelves in their Bondage, and never think themſelves ſo Brave and Gallant, as when by profane Swearing, Drunkenneſs, Uncleanneſs, Covetouſneſs, and Scoffing at Religion, they openly diſavow the Lord whom they ſerve, the Maſter to whom they do belong. But their *Damnation ſleepeth not*, whatever they may *dream* in the mean time.

2. HENCE it follows that ordinarily all Men have a *Right* in themſelves, to caſt off the Rule of Sin, and to vindicate themſelves into liberty. They may when they will, plead the Right and Title of the Law of God unto the Rule of their Souls, to the utter Excluſion of all Pleas and Pretences of Sin, for its Power. They have Right to ſay unto it, *Get thee hence, what have I to do any more with Idols?*

ALL Men, I ſay, have this *Right* in themſelves, becauſe of the natural Allegeance they owe to the Law of God; but they have not *Power* of themſelves to execute this *Right*, and actually to caſt off the yoke of ſin; but this is the work of Grace. Sin's Dominion is broke only by Grace.

BUT

BUT you will ſay then, Unto what end ſerves this *Right*, if they have not Power in themſelves to put it in Execution? And how can it be charged as an Aggravation of their ſin, that they do not uſe the Right which they have, ſeeing they have no *Power* ſo to do? Will you blame a Man that hath a Right to an Eſtate if he do not recover it, when he hath no means ſo to do?

I anſwer briefly Three Things.

1*ſt*. NO Man living neglects the *uſe of this Right*, to caſt off the Yoke and Dominion of Sin, becauſe he *cannot* of himſelf make uſe of it; but meerly becauſe he will not. He doth *voluntarily chuſe* to continue under the Power of Sin, and looks on every thing as his Enemy, that would deliver him. *The carnal Mind is Enmity againſt God, it is not ſubject unto his Law, nor can it be*, *Rom.* viii. 7. When the Law comes at any time to claim its Right and Rule over the Soul, a Man under the Power of Sin, looks on it as his Enemy that comes to diſturb his Peace, and fortifies his mind againſt it. And when the Goſpel comes and tenders the way and means for the Souls delivery, offering its aid and aſſiſtance unto that end; this alſo is looked on as an Enemy,

Enemy, and is rejected, and all its offers unto that end. See *Prov.* i. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25. and *John* iii. 19. This then is the Condition of every one that abides under the Dominion of Sin: He *chuſes ſo to do*; he continues in that ſtate by an act of his own Will; he avows an Enmity unto every thing which would give him deliverance; which will be a ſore Aggravation of his Condemnation at the laſt day.

2*ly.* GOD may juſtly require that of any, which it is in the Power of the *Grace of the Goſpel* to enable them to perform and comply withal. For this is tendred unto them in the Preaching of it every day. And although we know not the ways and means of the effectual Communication of Grace unto the Souls of men; yet this is certain, that Grace is ſo tendred in the preaching of the Goſpel, that none go without it, none are deſtitute of its aids and aſſiſtances, but thoſe alone, who by a *free act of their own Wills*, do refuſe and reject it. This is that which the whole Cauſe depends on; *You will not come unto me, that you may have Life.* And this all Unbelievers have or may have Experience of in themſelves. They may know on a due Examination of themſelves, that they do

do *voluntarily* refuſe the aſſiſtance of Grace, which is offered for their deliverance. Therefore is their deſtruction of themſelves. But,

3*ly*. THERE is a time, when Men loſe even the Right alſo. He who gave up himſelf to have his Ear bored, loſt all his claim unto future Liberty; he was not to go out at the year of *Jubile*. So there is a Time when God *judicially* gives up Men to the Rule of Sin, to abide under it for ever; ſo as that they loſe all *Right* unto Liberty. So he dealt with many of the *Idolatrous Gentiles of old*, Rom. i. 24, 26, 28. and ſo continues to deal with the like profligate Sinners. So he acts towards the *generality* of the *Anti-chriſtian World*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 11, 12. and with many deſpiſers of the Goſpel, *Iſa*. vi. 9, 10. When it is come to this, Men are *caſt at Law*; and have loſt all Right and Title unto *Liberty* from the Dominion of Sin. They may repine ſometimes at the Service of Sin or the Conſequence of it, in Shame and Pain, in the ſhameful Diſtempers that will purſue many in their Uncleanneſs; yet God having given them up *judicially* unto Sin, they have not ſo much as a Right to put up one Prayer or Petition for deliverance; nor will they do

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ſo, but are bound in the fetters of curſed Preſumption or Deſpair. See their Work and Wages, *Rom.* ii. 5, 6. This is the moſt woeful ſtate and condition of Sinners in this World; an unavoidable entrance into the Chambers of Death. You that have lived long under the power of Sin, beware leaſt that come upon you which is ſpoken of in theſe Scriptures. You have as yet a *Right* unto deliverance from that bondage and ſervitude wherein you are, if you put in your Claim in the Court of Heaven. You know not how ſoon you may be deprived of *this alſo*, by God's giving you up judicially unto Sin and Satan. Then all Complaints will be too late, and all ſprings of endeavours for Relief be utterly dry'd up. All your Reſerves for a future Repentance ſhall be cut off, and all your Cries ſhall be deſpiſed: *Prov.* i. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. Whilſt it is yet *called to day harden not your hearts*, leaſt God *ſwear in his wrath, that you ſhall never enter into his Reſt.*

THAT you may be warned, take notice that the *Signs* or *Symptoms* of the approach of ſuch a ſeaſon, of ſuch an irrecoverable condition, are (1.) a long continuance in the practice of any known ſin.

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There are bounds of divine Patience. The long ſuffering of God for a time *waits for Repentance*, 1 *Pet.* iij. 20. 2 *Pet.* iij. 9. But there is a time, when it doth only endure *Veſſels of Wrath*, fitted for Deſtruction, *Rom.* ix. 22. which is commonly after a long continuance in known ſin. (2.) When Convictions have been digeſted, and Warnings deſpiſed. God doth not uſually deal thus with Men, until they have rejected the means of their Deliverance. There is a Generation indeed, who from their youth up do live in a contempt of God; ſuch are thoſe proud ſinners whom the *Pſalmiſt* deſcribes, *Pſal.* x. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, *&c.* There are ſeldom any tokens of the going forth of the Decree againſt this ſort of Men. The appearing evidences of it, are their *adding drunkenneſs unto thirſt*; one kind of ſin unto another, making a viſible Progreſs in ſinning, adding boaſting and a profane Contempt of all things Sacred, unto their Courſe in Sin. But ordinarily thoſe that are in danger of this *judicial Hardneſs*, have had warnings and convictions, which made ſome impreſſion on them; but are now left without any Calls and Rebukes, or at leaſt any ſenſe of them. (3.) When Men contract the

guilt of ſuch Sins, as ſeem to entrench on the unpardonable ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. Such as proud, contemptuous, malicious Reproaches of the ways of God, of Holineſs, of the Spirit of Chriſt and his Goſpel. This ſort of Perſons are frequently marked in the Scripture, as thoſe who at leaſt are nigh unto a final and fatal Rejection. (4.) *A voluntary relinquiſhment of the means of Grace*, and Converſion unto God, which men have enjoy'd. And this is commonly accompanied with an hatred of the word, and thoſe by whom it is diſpenſed. Such Perſons God frequently, and that viſibly, gives up in an irrecoverable way unto the dominion of Sin. He declares that he will have no more to do with them. (5.) The reſolved choiſe of wicked, profane, unclean ſcoffing Society. It is very rare that any are recovered from that ſnare. And many other Signs there are of the near approach of ſuch an hardning Judgment, as ſhall give up men everlaſtingly to the ſervice of Sin. Oh that poor Sinners would awake, before it be too late.

2. THIS *Dominion* of Sin is *evil and perverſe*, not only becauſe it is *unjuſt* and uſurped, but becauſe it is always uſed and exerciſed unto *ill Ends*, unto the Hurt and Ruine

Ruine of them over whom it is. An Uſurper may make uſe of his Power and Rule for good Ends, for the good of them over whom he rules. But all the *ends* of the Dominion of ſin are evil unto ſinners. Sin in its *Rule* will pretend fair, offer ſundry advantages and ſatisfactions unto their Minds. They ſhall have *Wages* for their Work: *Pleaſure and Profit* ſhall come in by it. Yea on divers pretences it will promiſe them eternal Reſt at the cloſe of all; at leaſt that they ſhall not fail of it by any thing they do in its ſervice: And by ſuch means it keeps them in ſecurity. But the whole real Deſign of it, that which in all its Power it operates towards, is the eternal Ruine of their Souls; and this Sinners will underſtand when it is too late, *Jerem.* ij. 13, 19.

2*dly*. THIS Dominion of ſin is not a *meer force* againſt the Will and Endeavours of them that are under it. Where all the Power and Intereſt of Sin conſiſts in *putting a force* on the mind and ſoul by its Temptations, there it hath no Dominion. It may perplex them, it doth not rule over them: Where it hath Dominion, it hath the force and power of a *Law* in the Wills and Minds of them in whom it is. Hereby it requires Obedience of them, and they yield up

themſelves *Servants to obey it*, Rom. vi. 16.

WHEREFORE unto this *Dominion* of ſin, there is required a *Conſent of the Will* in ſome meaſure and degree. The *conſtant Reluctancy* and conquering Prevalency of the Will againſt it, defeats its Title unto Rule and Dominion; as the *Apoſtle* declares at large in the next *Chapter*. The Will is the ſovereign Faculty and Power of the Soul; whatever Principle acts in it, and determines it, that hath the Rule. Notwithſtanding Light and Conviction, the determination of the whole, as unto Duty and Sin, is in the power of the *Will*. If the will of ſinning be taken away, ſin cannot have Dominion. Here is Wiſdom. He that can diſtinguiſh between the *Impreſſions of Sin upon him*, and the *Rule of Sin in him*, is in the way of Peace. But this oft-times (as we ſhall farther ſee, with the Reaſon of it) is not eaſily to be attained unto. Convictions on the one hand, will make a great Pretence and Appearance of an Oppoſition in the Will unto Sin, by their unavoidable Impreſſions on it, when it is not ſo. And diſturbed Affections under Temptations, will plead, that the *Will it ſelf* is given up unto the choice and ſervice of ſin, when it

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is not ſo. The Will in this Matter is like the *Thebans Shield*, whilſt that was ſafe they conceited themſelves victorious, even in death. However this Caſe is determinable by the light of Scripture and Experience, and it is here propoſed unto a Determination.

3*dly*. IT is required unto this *dominion* of ſin, that the ſoul be not under any other *ſupreme Conduct*; that is, of the Spirit of God, and of his Grace by the Law. This is that which really hath the *ſovereign* Rule in all Believers: They are *led by the Spirit*, *guided by the Spirit*, acted and ruled by him, and are thereby under the Government of God and Chriſt, and no other. With this the *Rule of Sin* is abſolutely inconſiſtent. No Man can at once ſerve theſe two Maſters. Grace and Sin may be in the ſame Soul at the ſame time; but they cannot bear Rule in the ſame Soul at the ſame time. The *Throne* is ſingular, and will admit but of one Ruler. Every Evidence we have of being under the Rule of Grace, is ſo, that we are not under the Dominion of Sin.

THIS therefore is the principal way and means which we have to ſecure our Peace and Comfort againſt the Pretences

of Sin, unto the diſquietment of our Conſciences. Let us endeavour to preſerve an Experience of the Rule of Grace in our Hearts, *Col.* iij. 15. Under a Conduct and Rule whence our ſtate is *denominated*, we are and muſt be. This is either of Sin or Grace. There is no Compoſition nor Copartnerſhip between them, as to Rule: As to *Reſidence* there is, but not as unto *Rule*. If we can aſſure our ſelves of the one, we ſecure our ſelves from the other. It is therefore our Wiſdom, and lies at the foundation of all our Comforts, that we get Evidences and Experience of our being under the Rule of Grace; and it will evidence it ſelf, if we are not wanting unto a due Obſervation of its acting, and operation in us. And it will do it, among others, theſe Two ways.

1. BY keeping up a *Conſtancy of deſign* in living to God, and after Conformity unto Chriſt, notwithſtanding the interpoſition of ſurprizals by Temptations, and the moſt urgent ſolicitations of Sin: This is called, *Cleaving unto God, with purpoſe of Heart*, *Acts* xi. 23. This will be, whereever Grace hath the Rule. As a Man that goeth to Sea, deſigns ſome certain Place and Port, whither he guides his Courſe;

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in his way he meets, it may be, with Storms and croſs Winds, that drive him out of his Courſe, and ſometimes directly backward, towards the Place where he ſet forth; but his deſign ſtill holds, and in the purſuit thereof, he applies his Skill and Induſtry, to retrieve and recover all its loſſes and back-drivings; by croſs Winds and Storms. So is it with a Soul under the *Conduct of Grace*; its fixed deſign is to live unto God; but in its Courſe it meets with Storms and croſs Winds of Temptations, and various Artifices of Sin. Theſe diſturb him, diſorder him, drive him backwards ſometimes, as if it would take a contrary Courſe, and return unto the Coaſt of Sin from whence it ſet out. But where Grace hath the Rule and Conduct, it will weather all theſe Oppoſitions and Obſtructions; it will *reſtore the Soul*, bring it again into order, recover it from the confuſions and evil Frames that it was drawn into. It will give a freſh predominancy unto its *prevalent deſign* of living unto God in all things. It will do this conſtantly as often as the ſoul meets with ſuch ruffles from the Power of Sin; when there is a radical firmitude and ſtrength in a Cauſe or Deſign, it will work it ſelf out, through all

changes and variations. But when the ſtrength of any Cauſe is but Occaſion, the firſt oppoſition and diſorder will ruine us. So, if Mens purpoſes of living unto God, be only occaſional from preſent Convictions, the firſt vigorous Oppoſition or Temptation will diſorder it, and overthrow it. But where this is the radical Deſign of the Soul, from the Power of Grace, it will break through all ſuch Oppoſitions, and recover its Prevalency in the Mind and Affections. Hereby doth it evidence its Rule, and that the whole Intereſt of Sin in the Soul is by Rebellion, and not by virtue of Dominion.

2. IT doth ſo, by keeping up a *conſtant Exerciſe of Grace* in all religious Duties; or, at leaſt, a ſincere endeavour, that ſo it may be. Where Sin hath the Dominion, it can allow the Soul to perform religious Duties, yea, in ſome caſes, to abound in them. But it will take care that divine Grace be not exerciſed in them. Whatever there may be of delight in Duties or other motions of Affection, which Light, and Gifts, and Afflictions, and Superſtition will occaſion, there is no exerciſe of divine Faith and Love in them: This belongs *eſſentially* and inſeparably unto the Rule of Grace.

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Where-ever that bears ſway, the Soul will endeavour the conſtant Exerciſe of Grace in all its Duties, and never be ſatisfied in the *Work done*, without ſome ſenſe of it. Where it fails therein, it will judge it ſelf, and watch againſt the like ſurprizals; yea, unleſs it be in caſe of ſome great Temptation, the preſent ſenſe of the guilt of Sin, which is the higheſt Obſtruction againſt that ſpiritual *Boldneſs*, which is required unto the due exerciſe of Grace, that is of Faith and Love in holy Duties, ſhall not hinder the Soul from endeavouring after it, or the uſe of it.

3 IF by theſe means, and the like *inſeparable Operations of Grace*, we can have an aſſuring Experience, that we are under the Rule and Conduct of it, we may be free in our Minds from diſturbing Apprehenſions of the Dominion of Sin; for both cannot bear ſway in the ſame Soul.

4*thly*. IT is required hereunto, that ſin makes the Soul *ſenſible* of its Power and Rule, at leaſt doth that which may do ſo, unleſs Conſcience be utterly ſeared and hardned, and ſo *paſt feeling*. There is no Rule nor Dominion, but they are or may be ſenſible of it, who are ſubject thereunto. And there are *two Ways* whereby ſin in its

its Dominion, will make them sensible of it in whom it rules.

1. IN *repressing* and overcoming the *efficacy of the Convictions of the Mind.* Those who are under the Dominion of Sin (as we shall see more immediately) may have Light into, and Conviction of their Duty, in many things. And this Light and Conviction they may follow *ordinarily*, notwithstanding the Dominion of Sin. As a Tyrant will permit his slaves and subjects *ordinarily* to follow their own Occasions; but if what they would do, comes either in matter or manner to enterfere with or oppose his Interest, he will make them sensible of his Power. So Sin, where it hath the Dominion, if Men have Light and Conviction, it will allow them *ordinarily* and in many things to comply therewithal. It will allow them to pray, to hear the Word, to abstain from sundry sins, to perform many duties, as is expresly affirmed in the Scripture, of many that were under the power of Sin, and we see it in Experience. How much work do we see about Religion and religious Duties? What constant observation of the Times and Seasons of them? How many duties performed morally good in themselves and useful, by them,

them, who on many other Accounts, do proclaim themſelves to be under the Dominion of Sin? But if the Light and Conviction of this ſort of Perſons do riſe up in oppoſition unto the principal Intereſt of Sin, in thoſe Luſts and ways wherein it exerciſeth its Rule, it will make them, in whom they are, ſenſible of its Power. They that ſtifle, or ſhut their Eyes againſt, or caſt out of mind, or go directly contrary unto their Convictons; Light in ſuch caſes will firſt repine, and them relieve it ſelf with Reſolutions for other times and ſeaſons; but Sin will carry the Cauſe by virtue of its Dominion.

HENCE Two Things do follow.

1. A *Conſtant Repugnancy* againſt Sin, from Light in the Mind and Conviction in the Conſcience, doth not prove that thoſe in whom it is, are not under the Dominion of Sin. For until blindneſs and hardneſs do come on Men to the uttermoſt, there will be in them a judging of what is *Good and Evil*, with a *ſelf-judging* with reſpect thereunto, as the Apoſtle declares, *Rom.* ii. 15. And herein many do ſatisfie themſelves. When their Light condemns Sin, they ſuppoſe they hate it; but they do not. When Convictions call for Duties, they ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe they love them; but they do not. That which they look on as the *Rule* of *Light* in them, in oppoſition unto Sin, is but the Rebellion of a natural enlightned Conſcience, againſt the Dominion of it in the Heart. In brief; Light may condemn every known ſin, keep from many, preſs for every known Duty, lead to the performance of many; yet ſin have a full dominion in the ſoul. And this it will evidence when it comes to the trial, in thoſe Inſtances where it exerciſes its *ruling* Power.

2. THAT miſerable is their Condition whoſe Minds are ground continually between the *Conduct of their Light*, with the urgency of Conviction on the one hand, and the *Rule or Dominion of Sin* on the other. Where-ever Light is, it is its due to have the Rule and Conduct. It is that Act whereby the Mind loads it ſelf. For Men to be forced by the Power of their *Luſts*, to act for the moſt part againſt their *Light*, as they do where Sin hath the Dominion, it is a ſad and deplorable condition. Such Perſons are ſaid to *rebel againſt the Light*, *Job* xxiv. 13. becauſe of its right to rule in them, where it is depoſed by Sin. This makes moſt Men but a *troubled Sea that cannot reſt, whoſe Waves caſt up mire and dirt.*

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2*dly*. Sin will make thoſe in whom it hath dominion *ſenſible* of its Power, by its continual ſolicitations of the Mind and Affections, with reſpect unto that ſin, or thoſe ſins wherein it principally exerciſeth its Rule. Having poſſeſſed the Will and Inclinations of the Mind with the Affections, as it doth where-ever its Dominion is abſolute, it continually diſpoſeth, enclineth and ſtirreth up the Mind towards thoſe ſins. It will level the Bent of the whole Soul towards ſuch ſins or the circumſtances of them. Nor is there a more pregnant diſcovery of the Rule of Sin in any than this, that it *habitually* engageth the Mind and Affections, unto a conſtant exerciſe of themſelves about this or that, ſome Sin, and evil Way or other.

BUT yet we muſt add, that notwithſtanding theſe indications of the ruling Power of Sin, they are but *few* in whom it hath this Dominion, that are convinced of their State and Condition. Many are ſo under the Power of Darkneſs, of ſupine ſloath and negligence, and are ſo deſperately wicked, as that they have no ſenſe of this Rule of Sin. Such are thoſe deſcribed by the Apoſtle, *Epheſ.* iv. 18, 19. And whereas they are the vileſt Slaves that live

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on the Earth, they judge none to be free but themſelves: They look on others as in Bondage to fooliſh and *ſuperſtitious fears*, whilſt they are at liberty to Drink, Swear, Scoff at Religion, Whore, and Defile themſelves without controul. This is their Liberty; and they may have that which is as good in *Hell*; a Liberty to Curſe and Blaſpheme God, and to fly with revengeful Thoughts on themſelves, and the whole Creation. The *Light* in ſuch Perſons is *Darkneſs it ſelf*; ſo as that they have nothing to riſe up in oppoſition unto the rule of Sin, whence alone a ſenſe of its Power doth ariſe. Others (as we obſerved before) living in ſome compliance with their Light and Convictions, abſtaining from many Sins, and performing many Duties, though they live in ſome known ſin or other, and allow themſelves in it, yet will not allow that Sin hath the Dominion in them.

Wherefore there are Two Things hard and difficult in this Caſe.

1. TO convince thoſe in whom Sin evidently hath the Dominion, that ſuch indeed is their State and Condition; they will with their utmoſt endeavour keep of the Conviction hereof. Some *juſtifie* themſelves,

ſelves, and ſome will make no Enquiry into this matter. It is a rare thing, eſpecially of late, to have any brought under this Conviction by the Preaching of the Word; though it be the Caſe of multitudes that attend unto it.

2. TO *ſatisfie* ſome, that Sin hath not the Dominion over them, notwithſtanding its reſtleſs acting it ſelf in them, and warring againſt their Souls; yet, unleſs this can be done, it is impoſſible they ſhould enjoy ſolid Peace and Comfort in this Life. And the Concernment of the beſt of Believers, whilſt they are in this World, doth lie herein. For as they grow in Light, Spirituality, Experience, freedom of Mind and Humility, the more they love to know of the Deceit, Activity and Power of the Remainders of Sin. And although it works not at all, at leaſt not ſenſibly in them, towards thoſe Sins wherein it reigneth and rageth in others; yet they are able to diſcern its more ſubtil, inward and ſpiritual Actings in the Mind and Heart to the weakning of Grace, the obſtructing of its effectual Operations in holy Duties, with many indiſpoſitions unto ſtability in the Life of God, which fills them with trouble.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Second Enquiry ſpoken to; Whether Sin hath Dominion in us or no? In anſwer to which it's ſhewed, That ſome wear Sin's Livery, and they are the profeſſed Servants thereof. There are many in which the Caſe is dubious, where Sin's ſervice is not ſo diſcernable. Several Exceptions are put in againſt its Dominion, where it ſeems to prevail. Some certain Signs of its Dominion. Graces and Duties to be exerciſed for its Mortification.

THESE things being thus premiſed in general, concerning the Nature of the Dominion of Sin, we ſhall now proceed unto our principal Enquiry; namely, *Whether Sin have Dominion in us or no?* whereby we may know, *Whether we are under the Law or under Grace*, or what is the ſtate of our Souls towards God. An Enquiry this is, which is very neceſſary for ſome to make, and for all to have rightly determined in their Minds, from Scripture and Experience. For on that determination depends all our ſolid Peace. Sin will be in us; it will luſt, fight, and entice us; but

but the *great Queſtion*, as unto our Peace and Comfort is, whether it hath *Dominion over us or no?*

1. WE do not enquire concerning them in whom the reign of Sin is abſolute and eaſily diſcernable, if not to themſelves, yet to others. Such there are, who *viſibly yield up their Members inſtruments of Unrighteouſneſs to Sin*, Rom. vi. 13. Sin reigns in their *mortal Bodies, and they openly obey it in the Luſts thereof*, v. 12. They are avowedly *Servants of Sin unto Death*, v. 16. and are not aſhamed of it. *The ſhew of their Countenance doth witneſs againſt them; they declare their Sin as Sodom; they hide it not*, Iſa. iij. 9. Such are thoſe deſcribed, *Eph.* iv. 18, 19. and ſuch the World is filled withal. Such as being under the Power of Darkneſs and Enmity againſt God, do act them in oppoſition to all ſerious Godlineſs, and in the ſervice of various Luſts. There is no queſtion concerning their ſtate: They cannot themſelves deny that it is ſo with them. I ſpeak not for the liberty of Cenſuring, but for the eaſineſs of Judging. Thoſe who openly *wear Sin's Livery*, may well be eſteemed to be Sin's Servants; and they ſhall not fail to receive Sin's Wages. Let them at preſent

bear it never ſo high, and deſpiſe all manner of Convictions, they will find it *bitterneſs in the latter end*, Iſa. l. 11. Eccleſ. xi. 9.

2. BUT there are many in whom the *caſe is dubious*, and not eaſie to be determined; for on the one hand, they may have ſundry things in them, which ſeem *repugnant* unto the reign of Sin, but indeed are not *inconſiſtent* with it. All Arguments and Pleas from them in their vindication may fail them on a trial. And on the other hand, there may be ſome in whom the *effectual working of ſin* may be ſo great and perplexing, as to argue that it hath the dominion, when indeed it hath not, but is only a ſtubborn Rebel.

THE things of the *firſt ſort* which ſeem deſtructive of, and *inconſiſtent with the Dominion of Sin*, but indeed are not, may be referred to five Heads.

1. *ILLUMINATION* in Knowledge and ſpiritual Gifts, with Convictions of Good and Evil, of all known Duties and Sins. This is that which ſome Men live in a perpetual Rebellion againſt, in one inſtance or another.

2. *A Change in the Affections*, giving a temporary Delight in Religious Duties, with ſome conſtancy in their Obſervations.

ons. This alſo is found in many who are yet evidently under the Power of Sin, and ſpiritual Darkneſs.

3. A *Performance of many Duties* both Moral and Evangelical, for the ſubſtance of them; and an Abſtinence, out of Conſcience, from many Sins. So was it with the *Young Man in the Goſpel*, who yet wanted what was neceſſary to free him from the Dominion of Sin, *Matth.* xix. 20, 21, 22, 23.

4. *REPENTANCE for Sin committed.* This is that which moſt ſecure themſelves by; and a bleſſed ſecurity it is, when it is Gracious, Evangelical, a fruit of Faith, comprizing the Return of the whole Soul to God. But there is that which is legal, partial, reſpecting particular Sins only; which is not pleadable in this Caſe. *Ahab* was no leſs under the Dominion of Sin, when he had Repented him, than he was before. And *Judas* Repented him before he hanged himſelf.

5. *PROMISES and Reſolutions againſt Sin for the future.* But the Goodneſs of many in theſe things, is like *the morning Cloud, and as the early Dew* it paſſeth away, as it is in the Prophet, *Hoſ.* vi. 4.

WHERE there is a Concurrence of theſe things in any, they have good hopes, at leaſt, that they are *not under the Dominion of Sin*; nor is it eaſie to convince them, that they are: And they may ſo behave themſelves herein, as that it is not conſiſtent with Chriſtian Charity to pronounce them ſo to be. Howbeit, the *fallacy* that is in theſe things, hath been detected by many; and much more is by all required to evidence the ſincerity of Faith and Holineſs. No Man therefore can be acquitted by pleas taken from them, as unto their ſubjection to the Reign of Sin.

THE things of the *ſecond ſort*, whence Arguments may be taken to prove the Dominion of Sin in any Perſon, which yet will not certainly do it, are thoſe which we ſhall now examine. And we muſt obſerve,

1. THAT where Sin hath the *Dominion*, it doth indeed rule in the *whole Soul*, and all the faculties of it. It is a *vitious Habit* in all of them, corrupting them in their ſeveral Natures and Power; with that Corruption whereof they are capable. So in the Mind, of Darkneſs and Vanity; the Will, of Spiritual Deceit and Perverſneſs; the Heart, of Stubbornneſs and Senſuality.

ſuality. Sin in its Power reaches unto, and affects them all. But,

2. IT doth *evidence its Dominion*, and is to be tryed by its acting in the diſtinct Faculties of the Mind; in the frame of the Heart, and in the courſe of the Life.

THESE are thoſe which we ſhall examine; *Firſt*, thoſe which render the caſe *dubious*; and then thoſe that clearly determine it on the part of Sin.

I ſhall not therefore at preſent give poſitive Evidences of Mens Freedom from the Dominion of Sin; but only conſider the Arguments that lie againſt them, and examine how far they are concluſive, or how they may be defeated. And,

1. *WHEN Sin hath in any inſtance poſſeſſed the Imagination, and thereby engaged the cogitative Faculty in its Service, it is a dangerous ſymptom of its Rule or Dominion.* Sin may exerciſe its Rule in the Mind, Fancy, and Imagination, where bodily ſtrength or opportunity give no Advantage for its outward Perpetration. In them the deſires of Sin may be enlarged as Hell, and the ſatisfaction of Luſt taken in with greedineſs. Pride and Covetouſneſs, and Senſuality may reign and rage in the Mind, by corrupt Imaginations, when

their outward Exerciſe is ſhut up by circumſtances of Life.

THE firſt way whereby Sin acts it ſelf, or coins its Motions and Inclinations into Acts, is by the *Imagination*, *Gen.* vi. 5. The continual evil *Figments of the Heart*, are as the bubbling of corrupt Waters from a corrupted Fountain.

THE Imaginations intended are the *fixing of the Mind on the Objects of Sin*, or ſinful Objects by continual Thoughts, with delight and complacency. They are the Minds purveying for the *ſatisfaction of the Fleſh in the Luſts thereof*, Rom. xiij. 14. whereby *Evil Thoughts come to lodge*, to abide, to dwell in the Heart, *Jer.* iv. 14.

THIS is the firſt and proper Effect of that *Vanity of Mind* whereby the Soul is alienated from the Life of God. The Mind being turned off from its proper Object with a diſlike of it, applies its ſelf by its Thoughts and Imaginations unto the Pleaſures and Advantages of Sin, ſeeking in vain to recover the Reſt and Satisfaction which they have forſaken in God himſelf. They follow after lying Vanities, and forſake their own Mercies, *Jonah* ij. 8. And when they give themſelves up unto a conſtant internal converſe with the deſires of the

the Fleſh, the Pleaſures and Advantages of Sin, with delight and approbation; Sin may reign triumphantly in them, though no appearance be made of it in their outward Converſation. Such are they who have a *Form of Godlineſs, but deny the Power thereof*; their hearts being fill'd with a Litter of ungodly Luſts, as the Apoſtle declares, 2 *Tim.* iij. 5.

AND there are Three Evils, with reſpect whereunto, Sin doth exerciſe its reigning Power in the Imagination, in an eſpecial manner.

1. *PRIDE, Self-Elation, Deſire of Power and Greatneſs.* It is affirmed of the *Prince of Tyrus*, that he ſaid, *He was a God, and ſat in the Seat of God*, Ezek. xxviij. 3. And the like fooliſh Thoughts are aſcribed unto the King of *Babylon*, *Iſa.* xiv. 13, 14. None of the Children of Men can attain ſo great Glory, Power and Dominion in this World, but that in their Imaginations and Deſires they can infinitely exceed what they do enjoy; like him who wept, that he had not another World to Conquer. They have no bounds but to be *as God*, yea, to be *God*; which was the firſt deſign of Sin in the World. And there is none ſo poor and low, but by his Imaginations, he can

liſt up and exalt himſelf almoſt into the Place of God. This Vanity and Madneſs God reproves in his Diſcourſe with *Job*, *Chap.* xl. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. And there is nothing more genuine and proper unto the Original Depravation and Corruption of our Natures, than this *Self-Exaltation* in fooliſh Thoughts and Imaginations; becauſe it firſt came upon us through a deſire of *being as God*. Herein therefore may Sin exerciſe its Dominion in the Minds of Men; yea, in the empty Mind and Vanity of theſe Imaginations, with thoſe that follow, conſiſts the principal Part of the Deceitful Ways of Sin. The Ways of Men cannot ſatisfie themſelves with what Sins they can actually commit; but in theſe Imaginations they rove endleſly, finding ſatisfaction in their Renovation and Variety, *Iſa.* lvij. 1.

2. *SENSUALITY and Uncleanneſs of Life.* It is ſaid of ſome, *That they have their Eyes full of Adulteries, and that they cannot ceaſe from Sin*, 2 *Pet.* ij. 14. That is, their Imaginations are continually working about the Objects of their unclean Luſts. Theſe they think of Night and Day, immiring themſelves in all Filth continually. *Jude* calls them *filthy Dreamers*,

ers, defiling the Fleſh, v. 8. They live as in a conſtant pleaſing Dream by their vile Imaginations, even when they cannot accompliſh their luſtful deſires. For ſuch Imaginations cannot be better expreſſed than by *Dreams*; wherein Men ſatisfie themſelves with a ſuppoſed acting of what they do not. Hereby do many wallow in the mire of Uncleanneſs all their Days; and for the moſt part are never wanting unto the Effects of it, when they have Opportunity and Advantage. And by this means the moſt cloyſtered *Recluſes* may live in conſtant Adulteries, whereby multitudes of them become actually the Sinks of Uncleanneſs. This is that, which in the Root of it is ſeverely condemned by our *Saviour*, *Matth.* v. 28.

3. *UNBELIEF, Diſtruſt and hard Thoughts of God*, are of the ſame kind. Theſe will ſometimes ſo poſſeſs the Imaginations of Men, as to keep them off from all delight in God, to put them on contrivances of flying from him; which is a peculiar Caſe, not here to be ſpoken unto.

IN theſe and the like ways may Sin exerciſe its Dominion in the Soul, by the Mind and its Imagination. It may do ſo, when no demonſtration is made of it in the

the outward Converſation. For, by this means, the minds of men are defiled; and then nothing is clean, *all things are impure unto them*, *Tit.* i. 15. Their minds being thus defiled, do defile all things to them, their Enjoyments, their Duties, all they have, and all that they do.

BUT yet all failing, and Sin in this kind doth not prove abſolutely, that ſin hath not the Dominion in the Mind that it had before. Something of this Vice and Evil, may be found in them that are freed from the reign of Sin. And there will be ſo, until the *Vanity* of our Minds is perfectly cured and taken away, which will not be in this World. Wherefore I ſhall name the *Exceptions*, that may be put in againſt the Title of Sin, unto Dominion in the Soul; notwithſtanding the continuance in ſome meaſure of this work of the Imagination, in coining *Evil figments* in the Heart. And,

1. THIS is no Evidence of the Dominion of Sin, where it is *occaſional* ariſing from the Prevalency of ſome preſent Temptation; take an Inſtance in the Caſe of *David*. I no way doubt, but that in his Temptation with *Bathſheba*, his Mind was poſſeſs'd with defiling Imaginations. Where-

Wherefore on his Repentance, he not only prays for the Forgiveneſs of his Sin, but crys out with all fervency, that God *would create a clean Heart in him*, *Pſal.* li. 10. He was ſenſible not only of the defilement of his Perſon by his *actual Adultery*; but of his Heart, by *impure Imaginations*. So it may be in caſe of other Temptations. Whilſt Men are entangled with any Temptation, of what ſort ſoever it be, it will multiply Thoughts about it in the Mind: Yea its *whole Power* conſiſts in a multiplication of Evil Imaginations. By them it blinds the Mind, draws it off from the conſideration of its Duty, and enticeth it unto a full conception of Sin, *Jam.* i. 14. Wherefore in this Caſe of a *prevalent Temptation*, which may befal a true Believer, the corrupt working of the Imagination, doth not prove the Dominion of ſin.

IF it be enquired, How the Mind may be freed and cleared of theſe perplexing, defiling Imaginations, which ariſe from the urgency of ſome preſent Temptation, ſuppoſe about *earthly Affairs*, or the like? I ſay, It will never be done by the moſt ſtrict Watch and Reſolution againſt them; nor by the moſt reſolute Rejection of them. They will return with new Violence, and

new

new Pretences, though the Soul hath promiſed it ſelf a Thouſand times, that ſo they ſhould not do. There is but one way for the cure of this Diſtemper, and this is a *thorough Mortification of the Luſt* that feeds them, and is fed by them. It is to no purpoſe to ſhake of the Fruit in this caſe, unleſs we dig up the Root. Every Temptation deſigns the ſatisfaction of ſome Luſts of the Fleſh or of the Mind. Theſe Evil Thoughts and Imaginations are the working of the Temptation in the Mind. There is no riddance of them, no conqueſt to be obtained over them, but by *ſubduing the Temptation*; and no ſubduing the Temptation, but by the *Mortification of the Luſt*, whoſe ſatisfaction it is deſign'd unto. This Courſe the Apoſtle directs unto, *Col.* iij. 3, 5. That which he enjoins is, that we *would not ſet our Minds on the things of the Earth*, in oppoſition unto the things above; that is, that we would not fill our Imaginations, and thereby our Affections with them. But what is the way whereby we may be enabled ſo to do? that is, ſaith he, the *univerſal Mortification of Sin*, v. 5.

FOR want of the Wiſdom and Knowledge hereof; or for want of its Practice, thorough a ſecret *unwillingneſs*, to come up

up unto a *full Mortification* of Sin, ſome are galled and perplexed, yea, and defiled with fooliſh and vain Imaginations all their days. And although they prove not the Dominion of Sin, yet they will deprive the Soul of that peace and comfort which otherwiſe it might Enjoy.

BUT yet there is much ſpiritual Skill and Diligence required to diſcover, what is the true Root and Spring of the fooliſh *Imaginations* that may at any time poſſeſs the Mind. For they lie deep in the Heart; that *Heart which is deep and deceitful*, and ſo are not eaſily diſcoverable. There are many other Pretences of them. They do not directly beſpeak that Pride or unclean Luſts which they proceed from; but they make many other Pretences, and feign other Ends. But the Soul that is watchful and diligent may trace them to their Original. And if ſuch Thoughts are ſtrictly examined at any time, what is their deſign, whoſe work they do, what makes them ſo buſie in the Mind, they will confeſs the Truth, both whence they came, and what it is they aim at. Then is the Mind guided unto its Duty, which is the Extermination of the Luſt, which they would make Proviſion for.

2. SUCH

2. SUCH Imaginations are no Evidence of the Dominion of Sin, in what degree soever they are, where they are afflictive; where they are a burthen unto the Soul, which it groans under and would be delivered from. There is a full account given by the Apostle, of the conflict between indwelling Sin and Grace, *Rom.* vij. And the things which he ascribes unto Sin, are not the first rising or involuntary Motions of it, nor merely its Inclinations and Disposition: For the things ascribed unto it, as that it *Fights*, *Rebels*, *Wars*, *leads Captive*, acts as a *Law*, cannot belong unto them; nor doth he intend the outward acting or perpetration of Sin, the doing, or accomplishing, or finishing of it: For that cannot befal Believers, as the Apostle declares, 1 *Joh.* iij. 9. But it is the working of Sin by these Imaginations in the Mind, and the Engagement of the Affections thereon, that he doth intend. Now this he declares to be the great burden of the Souls of Believers, that which makes them think their Condition wretched and miserable in some sort, and which they earnestly cry out for deliverance from, *v.* 24. This is the present Case. These Figments of the Heart, these Imaginations will arise in the Minds

of

of Men. They will do ſo ſometimes to an high degree. They will impoſe them on us with Deceit and Violence, leading Captive unto the Law of them; where they are rejected, condemned, defied; they will return again while there is any Vanity remaining in the Mind, or Corruption in the Affections. But if the Soul be ſenſible of them, if it labour under them, if it look on them as thoſe that fight againſt its Purity, Holineſs and Peace, if it pray for deliverance from them, they are no Argument of the Dominion of Sin. Yea, a great Evidence unto the contrary may be taken from that firm Oppoſition unto them, which the Mind is conſtantly engaged in.

3. THEY are not a proof of the Dominion of Sin, when there is a prevalent Deteſtation of the Luſt from whence they proceed, and whoſe promotion they deſign, maintained in the Heart and Mind. I confeſs, ſometimes this cannot be diſcovered; and all ſuch various Imaginations are but mere Effects of the incurable Vanity and Inſtability of our Minds. For theſe adminiſter continual occaſion unto random Thoughts: But for the moſt part, (as we obſerved before) they are employed

ed in the ſervice of ſome Luſt, and tend unto the ſatisfaction of it. They are that which is prohibited by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* xiij. 14. *Make no proviſion*, &c. And this may be diſcovered on ſtrict Examination. Now when the Mind is fixed in a conſtant deteſtation of that Sin, whereunto they lead, as it is Sin againſt God, with a firm Reſolution againſt it, in all circumſtances that may occur; no proof can be thence taken for the Dominion of Sin.

4. SOMETIMES evil Thoughts are the immediate Injections of Sathan, they are on many Accounts moſt terrible unto the Soul. Uſually for the Matter of them, they are dreadful, and oft-times blaſphemous. And as unto the manner of their Entrance into the Mind, it is, for the moſt part, ſurprizing, furious and inviſible. From ſuch Thoughts many have concluded themſelves to be abſolutely under the Power of Sin and *Sathan*. But they are by certain Rules and infallible Signs, diſcoverable from whence they do proceed. And on that diſcovery all pretences unto the Dominion of Sin in them, muſt diſappear. And this is the firſt Caſe which renders the Queſtion dubious, *Whether Sin have the Dominion in us or no?*

2*dly*. IT is a ſign of the Dominion of Sin, when in any Inſtance it hath a prevalency in our Affections: Yea, they are the Throne of Sin, where it acts its Power. But this Caſe of the Affections, I have handled ſo at large in my Diſcourſe of ſpiritual Mindedneſs, as I ſhall here very briefly ſpeak unto it, ſo as to give one Rule only to make a Judgment by, concerning the Dominion of Sin in them.

THIS is certain, that where Sin hath the Prevalency and Predominancy in our Affections, there it hath the Dominion in the whole Soul. The Rule is given us unto this purpoſe, 1 *Joh*. ij. 15. We are obliged to *love the Lord our God with all our Hearts, and all our Souls*. And therefore if there be in us a predominant Love to any thing elſe, whereby it is preferred unto God, it muſt be from the Prevalency of a Principle of Sin in us. And ſo it is with reſpect unto all other Affections. If we love any thing more than God, as we do if we will not part with it for his ſake, be it as a *Right Eye*, or as a *Right Hand* unto us, if we take more ſatisfaction and complacency in it, and cleave more unto it in our Thoughts and Minds than unto God, as Men commonly do in their Luſts, Intereſts, Enjoy-

ments and Relations; if we truſt more to it, as unto a ſupply of our wants, than unto God, as moſt do to the World; if our Deſires are enlarged, and our Diligence heightned, in ſeeking after and attaining other things, more than towards the Love and Favour of God; if we fear the Loſs of other things, or Danger from them more than we fear God; we are not under the Rule of God or his Grace; but we are under the Dominion of Sin, which reigns in our Affections.

IT were endleſs to give Inſtances of this Power of Sin in and over the Affections of Men. Self-Love, Love of the World, Delight in things ſenſual, an over-valuation of Relations and Enjoyments; with ſundry other things of an alike nature, will eaſily evidence it. And to reſolve the Caſe under Conſideration, we may obſerve,

1. THAT the prevalency of Sin in the Affections, ſo far as to be a Symptom of its Dominion, is diſcernable unto the leaſt beam of ſpiritual Light, with a diligent ſearching into, and Judgment of our ſelves. If it be ſo with any, and they know it not, nor will be convinced of it, (as it is with many) I know not what can free

free them from being under the Reign of Sin. And we ſee it ſo every day. Men, all whoſe Ways and Actions proclaim, that they are acted in all things, by an inordinate Love of the World and Self, yet find nothing amiſs in themſelves; nothing that they do not approve of, unleſs it be that their Deſires are not ſatisfied according to their Expectations. All the Commands we have in the Scripture for Self-Searching, Trial and Examination; all the Rules that are given us unto that End, all the warnings we have of the Deceitfulneſs of Sin, and of our own Hearts; they are given us to prevent this Evil of ſhutting our Eyes againſt the prevalent Corruption and Diſorder of our Affairs. And the Iſſue of all our Endeavours in this kind, is in the Appeal of *David* to God himſelf, *Pſal.* cxxxix. 23, 24.

2. WHEN Men have Convictions of the irregularity and diſorder of their Affections, yet are reſolved to continue in the State wherein they are, without the correction and amendment of them; becauſe of ſome Advantages and Satisfaction, which they receive in their preſent State; they ſeem to be under the Dominion of Sin. So is it with thoſe mention'd, *Iſa.*

vij. 10. upon the Account of the preſent ſatisfaſtion, delight and pleaſure, that their corrupt Affections do take in cleaving inordinately unto their Objects, they will not endeavour their Change and Alteration.

3. THIS then is the ſole ſafe Rule in this Caſe. Whatever hold Sin may have got in our Affections; whatever prevalency it may have in them, however it may entangle and defile them; if we endeavour ſincerely the diſcovery of this Evil, and therein ſet our ſelves conſtantly unto the Mortification of our corrupt Affections by all due means, there is not in their diſorder any Argument to prove the Dominion of Sin in us. Our Affections, as they are corrupt, are the proper Objects of the great Duty of Mortification; which the Apoſtle therefore calls our *Members that are on the Earth*, *Col.* iij. 5. This is a ſafe Anchor for the Soul in this Storm. If it live in a ſincere endeavour after the Mortification of every diſcoverable Corruption, and Diſorder in the Affections, it is ſecure from the Dominion of Sin. But as for ſuch, as are negligent in ſearching after the State of their Souls, as unto the Inclinations and Engagement of their Affections, who approve of themſelves in their greateſt irregularities,

gularities, reſolvedly indulge themſelves in every way of Sin to gratifie their ſenſual Affections, they muſt provide themſelves of Pleas for their Vindication; I know them not. But the meaning of our preſent Rule, will be farther manifeſt in what enſues.

3*dly*. IT is a dangerous ſign of the Dominion of Sin, when after a Conviction of their neceſſity, it prevaileth unto a neglect of thoſe ways and duties, which are peculiarly ſuited, directed and ordained unto its Mortification and Deſtruction. This may be cleared in ſome particulars.

1. MORTIFICATION of Sin, is the conſtant Duty of all Believers, of all who would not have Sin have Dominion over them. Where Mortification is ſincere, there is no *Dominion of Sin*; and where there is no Mortification, there Sin doth reign.

2. THERE are ſome Graces and Duties that are peculiarly ſuited and ordained unto this End, that by them and their Agency, the work of Mortification may be carried on conſtantly in our Souls. What they are, or ſome of them, we ſhall ſee immediately.

3. WHEN Sin puts forth its Power in any eſpecial Luſt, or in a ſtrong Inclination unto any actual Sin, then it is the duty of the Soul to make diligent application of thoſe Graces and Duties, which are ſpecifical and proper unto its Mortification.

4. WHEN men have had a Conviction of theſe Duties, and have attended unto them according unto that Conviction; if Sin prevail in them to a neglect or relinquiſhment of thoſe Duties, as unto their performance, or as unto their application unto the Mortification of Sin, it is a dangerous ſign that Sin hath Dominion in them. And I diſtinguiſh between theſe things, namely, a neglect of ſuch Duties, as unto their performance and a neglect of the Application of them unto the Mortification of Sin. For men may, on other Accounts, continue the obſervance of them, or ſome of them, and yet not apply them unto this eſpecial End. And ſo all external Duties may be obſerved, when Sin reigneth in Triumph, 2 *Tim.* iij. 5.

THE meaning of the Aſſertion being ſtated, I ſhall now name ſome of thoſe Graces and Duties, unto whoſe Omiſſion and Neglect Sin may prevail, as unto an Application of them unto the Mortification of any Sin.

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THE *First* is, The daily exerciſe of Faith on Chriſt as Crucified. This is the great Fundamental Means of the mortification of Sin in general, and which we ought to apply unto every particular Inſtance of it. This the Apoſtle Diſcourſeth at large, *Rom.* vi. 6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13. Our *Old Man*, ſaith he, *is crucified with Chriſt, that the Body of Sin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve Sin.* Our *Old Man*, or the Body of Sin, is the Power and Reign of Sin in us. Theſe are to be *deſtroyed*; that is, ſo mortified, that henceforth we ſhould not *ſerve Sin*; that we ſhould be delivered from the Power and Rule of it. This, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, is done in Chriſt: Crucified with him. It is ſo meritoriouſly in his actual dying or being Crucified for us; it is ſo virtually, becauſe of the certain Proviſion that is made therein, for the Mortification of all Sin. But it is ſo actually by the Exerciſe of Faith on him as crucified, dead and buried, which is the means of the actual Communication of the virtue of his Death unto us for that End. Herein are we ſaid to be dead and buried with him, whereof Baptiſm is the Pledge. So by the Croſs of Chriſt, *the World is crucified unto us*, and

we are ſo to the World, *Gal.* vi. 14. which is the ſubſtance of the Mortification of all Sin. There are ſeveral Ways whereby the Exerciſe of Faith on Chriſt crucified, is effectual unto this End.

1. LOOKING unto him as ſuch, will beget holy Mourning in us, *Zech.* xij. 10. *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn.* It is a Promiſe of Goſpel Times and Goſpel Grace. A view of Chriſt, as pierced, will cauſe mourning in them that have received the Promiſe of the Spirit of Grace and Supplication there mentioned. And this mourning is the Foundation of Mortification. It is that godly Sorrow which works *Repentance* unto Salvation, *not to be repented of*, 2 *Cor.* vij. 10. And Mortification of Sin is of the Eſſence of Repentance. The more Believers are exerciſed in this View of Chriſt, the more humble they are; the more they are kept in that mourning frame, which is univerſally oppoſite unto all the Intereſt of Sin, and which keeps the Soul watchful againſt all its Attempts. Sin never reigned in an humble mourning Soul.

2. IT is effectual unto the ſame end, by the way of a powerful Motive, as that which calls and leads unto Conformity to him.

him. This is preſſed by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* vi. 8, 9, 10, 11. Our Conformity unto Chriſt, as crucified and dead, conſiſts in our being dead unto Sin, and thereby overthrowing the reign of it in our mortal Bodies. This Conformity, ſaith he, we ought to reckon on as our Duty; reckon your ſelves dead unto Sin, that is, that you ought ſo to be, in that Conformity, which you ought to aim at unto Chriſt crucified. Can any ſpiritual Eye behold Chriſt dying for Sin, and continue to live in Sin? Shall we keep that alive in us, which he dy'd for, that it might not eternally deſtroy us? Can we behold him bleeding for our Sins, and not endeavour to give them their deaths Wound? The efficacy of the Exerciſe of Faith herein unto the Mortification of Sin, is known unto all Believers in Experience.

3. FAITH herein gives us Communion with him in his Death, and unites the Soul unto it, in its Efficacy. Hence we are ſaid to be buried with him into Death, and to be planted together in the likeneſs of his Death, *Rom.* vi. 4, 5. Our *Old Man is crucified with him*, *v.* 6. We have by Faith Communion with him in his Death, unto the death of Sin.

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THIS therefore is the firſt Grace and Duty which we ought to attend unto for the Mortification of Sin. But where Sin hath that Intereſt and Power in the Mind, as to take it off from this Exerciſe of Faith, to prevent or obſtruct it, as it will do, ſo as that it will not, ſo as that it ſhall not dare to think or meditate on Chriſt crucified, becauſe of the inconſiſtency of ſuch Thoughts, with an Indulgence unto any Luſt; it is to be feared, that Sin is in the Throne.

IF it be thus with any; if they have not yet made uſe of this way and means for the Mortification of Sin; or if being convinced of it, they have been for any ſeaſon driven or withheld from the Exerciſe of Faith herein, I have nothing to offer to free them from this Evidence of the reign of Sin, but only that they would ſpeedily and carefully addreſs themſelves unto their Duty herein. And if they prevail on themſelves unto it, it will bring in its own Evidence of their freedom.

SOME, it may be, will ſay, That indeed they are unskilful in this Word of Righteouſneſs, as ſome are, *Heb.* v. 13. They know not how to make uſe of Chriſt crucified unto this End; nor, how to ſet themſelves about it. Other ways of Mortifica-

tification they can underſtand. The Diſcipline and Penances aſſigned by the Papiſts unto this End, are ſenſible. So are our own Vows and Reſolutions, with other Duties that are preſcribed; but as for this way of deriving Vertue from the Death of Chriſt unto the Death of Sin, they can underſtand nothing of it.

I eaſily believe that ſome may ſay ſo, yea ought to ſay ſo, if they would ſpeak their Minds. For the ſpiritual Wiſdom of Faith is required hereunto; but all Men have not Faith. On the loſs of this Wiſdom, the *Papiſts* have invented another way to ſupply the whole Exerciſe of Faith herein. They will make Crucifixes, Images of Chriſt crucified, then they will adore, embrace, mourn over, and expect great Verue from them. Without theſe Images they know no way of addreſſing unto Chriſt, for the Communication of any Virtue from his Death or Life. Others may be at the ſame loſs. But they may do well to conſider the cauſe of it. For,

1. IS it not from Ignorance of the Myſtery of the Goſpel, and of the Communication of ſupplies of ſpiritual things from Chriſt thereby, of the Efficacy of his Life and Death unto our Sanctification and Mortification of Sin? Or, 2. IS

2. IS it not becauſe indeed they have never been throughly diſtreſſed in their Minds and Conſciences by the Power of Sin; and ſo have never in good earneſt looked for relief? Light general Convictions either of the Guilt or Power of Sin will drive none to Chriſt. When their Conſciences are reduced unto real Streights, and they know not what to do, they will learn better how to *look unto him whom they have pierced.* Their Condition, whoever they are, is dangerous, who find not a neceſſity every day of applying themſelves by Faith unto Chriſt, for help and ſuccour. Or,

3. IS it not becauſe they have other reliefs to betake themſelves unto? Such are there own Promiſes and Reſolutions, which, for the moſt part, ſerve only to cheat and quiet Conſcience for an hour or a day, and then vaniſh into nothing. But whatever be the Caſe of this Neglect, thoſe in whom it is, will pine away in their Sins. For nothing but the Death of Chriſt for us, will be the death of Sin in us.

Secondly, Another Duty neceſſary unto this end, is continual Prayer, and this to be conſidered as unto its Application, to the prevalency of any particular Luſt, where-

wherein Sin doth in a peculiar manner exert its Power. This is the great Ordinance of God for its Mortification. For,

1. HEREBY we obtain ſpiritual Aids and Supplies of ſtrength againſt it. We are not more neceſſarily and fervently to pray that Sin may be pardoned, as to its guilt, than we are that it may be ſubdued, as to its power. He who is negligent in the latter, is never in good earneſt in the former. The Preſſures and Troubles which we receive from the Power of Sin, are as pungent on the Mind, as thoſe from its Guilt are on the Conſcience. Meer pardon of Sin will never give Peace unto a Soul, though it can have none without it. It muſt be mortified alſo, or we can have no ſpiritual Reſt. Now this is the work of Prayer, namely, to ſeek and obtain ſuch ſupplies of mortifying, ſanctifying Grace, as whereby the Power of Sin may be broken, its Strength abated, its Root withered, its Life deſtroyed, and ſo the whole Old Man crucified. That which was the *Apoſtles* requeſt for the *Theſſalonians*, is the daily Prayer of all Believers for themſelves, 1 *Theſ.* v. 23.

2. A conſtant Attendance unto this Duty in a due manner, will preſerve the Soul in

in ſuch a frame, as wherein Sin cannot habitually prevail in it. He that can live in ſin, and abide in the ordinary duties of Prayer, doth never once Pray as he ought. Formality, or ſome ſecret Reſerve or other, vitiates the whole. A truly gracious praying Frame (wherein we pray always) is utterly inconſiſtent with the love of, or reſerve for any ſin. To pray well, is to pray always; that is, to keep the Heart always in that frame which is required in Prayer: And where this is, ſin can have no Rule, no, nor quiet Harbour in the Soul.

3. IT is the Soul's immediate Conflict againſt the Power of ſin. Sin, in it is formally conſidered as the Soul's Enemy, which fights againſt it. In Prayer the Soul ſets it ſelf to graple with it, to wound, kill and deſtroy. It is that whereby it applies all its ſpiritual Engines unto its utter Ruine; herein it exerciſeth a gracious abhorrency of it, a clear ſelf-condemnation on the account of it, and engageth Faith on all the Promiſes of God, for its Conqueſt and Deſtruction.

IT is hence evident, that if Sin hath prevailed in the Mind, unto a negligence of this Duty, either in general, or, as unto the

the effectual Application of it, unto any eſpecial Caſe, where it exerts its Power, it is an ill Symptom of the Dominion of Sin in the ſoul.

IT is certain, that unmortified ſin, ſin indulged unto, will gradually work out all due regard unto this duty of Prayer, and alienate the mind from it, either as unto the matter or manner of its performance. We ſee this exemplified every day in Apoſtate Profeſſors. They have had a Gift of Prayer, and were conſtant in the Exerciſe of it; but the love of ſin, and living in it hath devoured their Gifts, and wholly taken off their minds from the Duty it ſelf, which is the proper Character of Hypocrites; will he delight himſelf in the Almighty? Will he *always call upon God? Job* xxvij. 10. He may do ſo for a Seaſon; but falling under the power of ſin, he will not continue ſo to do.

NOW becauſe ſin uſeth great Deceit herein, in a gradual Progreſs for attaining its End, and thereby ſecuring its Dominion; we may in a way of warning or caution, take notice of ſome of its ſteps, that the Entrances of it may be oppoſed. For as the Entrance of God's Word *giveth Light, Pſal.* cxix. 130. the firſt puttings forth

forth of its Power on the Soul, gives ſpiritual Light unto the Mind, which is to be improved; ſo the Entrance of ſin, the firſt actings of it on the Mind, towards the neglect of this Duty, brings a deceiving darkneſs with them, which is to be oppoſed.

1. It will produce in the mind an unreadineſs unto this duty in its proper Seaſons. The heart ſhould always rejoice in the approach of ſuch ſeaſons, becauſe of the delight in God, which it hath in them. To rejoice and be glad in all our approaches unto God, is every way required of us, and therefore with the Thoughts of and in the approach of ſuch ſeaſons, we ought to groan in our ſelves for ſuch a preparedneſs of Mind, as may render us meet for that Converſe with God, which we are called unto. But where Sin begins to prevail, all things will be unready and out of order. Strange Tergiverſations will riſe in the mind, either as unto the duty it ſelf, or as unto the manner of its performance. Cuſtomarineſs and Formality are the Principles which act themſelves in this Caſe. The Body ſeems to carry the Mind to the Duty whether it will or no, rather than the Mind to lead the Body in its part of it; And

And it will employ it ſelf in any thing, rather than in the Work and Duty that lies before it.

HEREIN then lies a great part of our Wiſdom, in obviating the power of ſin in us. Let us keep our hearts continually in a gracious Diſpoſition and readineſs for this Duty, in all its proper ſeaſons. If you loſe this ground, you will yet go more backwards continually. Know therefore, that there is no more effectual preſervative of the ſoul from the power of ſin, than a gracious readineſs for, and diſpoſition unto this duty in private and publick, according to its proper ſeaſons.

2. IN its Progreſs, unto unreadineſs it will add unwillingneſs; for the Mind prepoſſeſſed by ſin, finds it directly contrary unto its preſent Intereſt, Diſpoſition and Inclination. There is nothing in it but what troubles and diſquiets them; as he ſaid of the Prophet, who was not willing to hear him any more, it ſpeaks not good but evil of them continually. Hence a ſecret unwillingneſs prevails in the mind, and an averſation from a ſerious Engagement in it. And the Attendance of ſuch Perſons to it, is as if they were under a force, in a compliance with Cuſtom and Convictions.

3. SIN will at length prevail unto a total neglect of this Duty: This is an Obſervation confirmed by long Experience. If Prayer do not conſtantly endeavour the ruine of Sin, ſin will ruine Prayer; and utterly alienate the Soul from it. This is the way of Backſliders in heart; as they grow in ſin, they decay in prayer, until they are weary of it, and utterly relinquiſh it. So they ſpeak, *Mal.* i. 13. Behold *what a wearineſs it is*, and ye *have ſnuffed at it*. They look on it as a Task, as a Burthen, and are weary in attending unto it.

NOW when I place this as an Effect of the prevalency of ſin; namely, a relinquiſhment of the Duty of Prayer; I do not intend that Perſons do wholly and abſolutely, or as to all ways of it, publick and private, and all ſeaſons or occaſions of it, give it over utterly. Few ariſe to that profligacy in ſin, unto ſuch deſperate reſolutions againſt God. It may be they will ſtill attend unto the ſtated ſeaſons of Prayer, in Families or publick Aſſemblies, at leaſt drawing near to God with their Lips; and they will on ſurprizals and dangers perſonally cry unto God, as the Scripture every where teſtifieth of them. But this

this only I intend; namely, that they will no more ſincerely, immediately, and directly apply Prayer to the mortification and ruine of that Luſt or Corruption, wherein Sin puts forth its Power and Rule in them: And where it is ſo, it ſeems to have the Dominion. Of ſuch an one, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, *He hath left off to be wiſe and to do good; he ſetteth himſelf in a way that is not good, he aborreth not Evil*, Pſal. xxxvi. 3, 4.

BUT ſuch a Relinquiſhment of this Duty, as unto the End mentioned, as is habitual, and renders the Soul ſecure under it, is intended. For there may, through the power of Temptation, be a prevalency of this Evil in Believers for a ſeaſon. So God complains of his People, *Iſa.* xliij. 22. *Thou haſt not called upon me, O Jacob, but haſt been weary of me, O Iſrael*; that is, comparatively, as unto the fervency and ſincerity of the duty required of them. Now, when it is thus with Believers for a ſeaſon, through the Power of Sin and Temptation; (1.) They do not approve of themſelves therein. They will ever and anon call things to conſideration, and ſay, It is not with us as it ſhould be, or as it was in former days; this thing is not good that

we do; nor will it be Peace in the latter End. (2.) They will have ſecret Reſolutions of ſhaking themſelves out of the duſt of this Evil State; they ſay in themſelves, we will go and *return unto our firſt Husband*; *for, then it was better with us than now*; as the Church did, *Hoſ.* ij. 7. (3.) Every thing that peculiarly befals them in a way of Mercy or Affliction, they look on as Calls from God, to deliver and recover them from their Backſliding frame. (4.) They will receive in the Warnings which are given them by the Word preached, eſpecially, if their particular Caſe be touched on, or laid open. (5.) They will have no Quiet, Reſt, nor Self-approbation, until they come thoroughly off unto an healing and Recovery; ſuch as that deſcribed, *Hoſ.* xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.

THUS it may be with ſome over whom Sin hath not the Dominion; yet ought the firſt Entrance of it to be diligently watched againſt, as that which tends unto the danger and ruine of the Soul.

Thirdly, CONSTANT ſelf-abaſement, condemnation and abhorrency, is another duty that is directly oppoſed unto the Intereſt and Rule of ſin in the Soul. No frame of Mind is a better Antidote againſt

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the Poiſon of ſin; *He that walketh humbly, walketh ſurely.* God hath a continual regard unto Mourners, thoſe that are of a broken Heart and a contrite Spirit. It is the Soil where all Grace will thrive and flouriſh. A conſtant due ſenſe of ſin as ſin, of our Intereſt therein by Nature, and in the Courſe of our Lives, with a continual afflictive Remembrance of ſome ſuch Inſtances of it, as have had peculiar Aggravations iſſuing in a gracious Self-Abaſement, is the Soul's beſt poſture in watching againſt all the Deceits and Incurſions of Sin. And this is a duty which we ought with all diligence to attend unto. To keep our Souls in a conſtant frame of Mourning and Self-Abaſement, is the moſt neceſſary part of our Wiſdom, with reference unto all the Ends of the Life of God: And it is ſo far from having any inconſiſtency with thoſe Conſolations and Joys, which the Goſpel tenders unto us in Believing, as that it is the only way to let them into the Soul in a due manner. It is ſuch Mourners, and thoſe alone, unto whom Evangelical Comforts are adminiſtred, *Iſa.* lvij. 18.

ONE of the firſt things that ſin doth when it aims at Dominion, is the deſtructi-

on of this frame of Mind; and when it actually hath the Rule, it will not ſuffer it to enter: It makes men careleſs and regardleſs of this matter, yea, bold, preſumptuous and fearleſs: It will obſtruct all the entrances into the mind of ſuch Self-Reflections and Conſiderations, as lead unto this Frame: It will repreſent them either as needleſs or unſeaſonable; or make the mind afraid of them, as things which tend unto its diſquietment and diſturbance, without any advantage. If it prevail herein, it makes way for the ſecurity of its own Dominion. Nothing is more watched againſt than a proud, regardleſs, ſenſeleſs, ſecure frame of Heart, by them who are under the Rule of Grace.

Fourthly, A Reſerve for any one known ſin, againſt the Light and Efficacy of Convictions, is an Argument of the Dominion of ſin. So was it in the Caſe of *Naaman*; he would do all other things, but put in an Exception for that, wherein his Honour and Profit did depend. Where there is ſincerity in Convictions, it extends it ſelf unto all ſins: For it is of ſin as ſin, and ſo of every known ſin equally, that hath the nature of ſin in it. And to be true to Convictions is the Life of ſincerity. If men

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can make a choice of what they will except, and reſerve, notwithſtanding, their being convinced of its Evil, it is from the ruling Power of ſin. Pleas in the Mind, in the behalf of any ſin; that is, for a continuance in it, prevalent thereunto, ruines all ſincerity. It may be, the pretence is, That it is but a little one, of no great moment, and that which ſhall be compenſated with other duties of Obedience; or, it ſhall be retained only until a fitter ſeaſon for its Relinquiſhment; or, men may be blinded after Conviction to diſpute again, whether what they would abide in be ſinful or no, as is the Caſe frequently with reſpect unto Covetouſneſs, Pride and Conformity to the World; it is a dreadful effect of the ruling Power of Sin. Whatever impeacheth the Univerſality of Obedience in one thing, overthrows its ſincerity in all things.

Fifthly, HARDNESS of Heart, ſo frequently mentioned and complained of in the Scripture, is another Evidence of the Dominion of Sin. But becauſe there are various degrees alſo hereof, they muſt be conſidered, that we may judge aright what of it is an Evidence of that Dominion, and what may be conſiſtent with the Rule of

Grace: For it is that myſterious Evil whereof the beſt men do moſt complain; and whereof the worſt have no ſenſe at all.

CHAP. IV.

Hardneſs of Heart ſpoken to, as an eminent ſign of Sin's Dominion, and is ſhewed, that it ought to be conſidered as total or partial.

HARDNESS of Heart, is either Total and Abſolute; or, Partial and Comparative only.

TOTAL Hardneſs, is either Natural and Univerſal; or, Judiciary in ſome particular Individuals.

NATURAL Hardneſs, is the Blindneſs or Obſtinacy of the Heart in Sin, by Nature, which is not to be cured by the uſe or application of any outward Means. *Hardneſs and impenitent Heart*, Rom. ij. 5. This is that Heart of Stone, which God promiſes in the Covenant to take away, by the Efficacy of his Almighty Grace, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26. Where this Hardneſs abides uncured,

uncured, unremoved, there Sin is abſolutely in the Throne; this therefore we do not enquire about.

JUDICIARY Hardneſs, is either immediately from God; or, it is by the Devil, through his Permiſſion.

IN the firſt way, God is ſaid frequently to harden the Hearts of Men in their Sins, and unto their Ruine, as he did with *Pharaoh*; and he doth it in general Two ways, (1.) By with-holding from them thoſe ſupplies of Light, Wiſdom and Underſtanding, without which they cannot underſtand their Condition, ſee their Danger, nor avoid their Ruine. (2.) By with-holding the Efficacy of the means which they enjoy for their Conviction and Repentance; yea, and giving them an Efficacy unto their Obduration, *Iſa.* vi. 9, 10. And concerning this divine Induration, we may obſerve,

(1.) THAT it is the ſevereſt of divine Puniſhments in this World; (2.) That therefore it is not executed, but towards thoſe that are habitually wicked, and ſo do, of choice, harden themſelves in their Sins, *Rom.* i. 26, 28. (3.) For the moſt part it reſpects ſome eſpecial Times and Seaſons, wherein are the turning points for

for Eternity. (4.) That the Condition of thoſe ſo hardned is remedileſs, and their Wounds uncurable.

WHERE any are thus hardned, there is no Queſtion about the Dominion of Sin. Such an Heart is its Throne, its proper Seat next to Hell.

THERE is a Judiciary Hardneſs, which *Sathan*, through God's Permiſſion, brings on men, 2 *Cor.* iv. 4. And there are many ways whereby he doth effect it, not here to be inſiſted on.

BUT there is an Hardneſs of Heart, that is indeed but *partial* and *comparative*, whatever appearance it may make of that which is *total and abſolute*, where the Enquiry ariſeth, whether it be an Evidence of the Dominion of Sin or no.

THERE is an Hardneſs of Heart, which is known and lamented in them in whom it is. Hereof the Church complains, *Iſa.* lxiij. 17. *O Lord, why haſt thou hardened our Heart from thy Fear?* or ſuffered it ſo to be; not healing, not recovering our Hardneſs. And there are ſundry things which concurr in this kind of Hardneſs of Heart. As,

1. WANT of readineſs to receive divine Impreſſions from the Word of God. When

When the Heart is ſoft and tender, it is alſo humble and contrite, and ready to tremble at the word of God. So it is ſaid of *Joſia*, that his *Heart was tender, and he humbled himſelf before the Lord*, when he heard his Word, 2 *Kings* xxij. 18, 19. This may be wanting in ſome in a great meaſure, and they may be ſenſible of it. They may find in themſelves a great unreadineſs to comply with divine Warnings, Reproofs, Calls. They are not affected with the Word preached, but ſometimes complain that they ſit under it like Stocks and Stones. They have not an experience of its Power, and are caſt into the mould of it. Hereon they apprehend that their Hearts are hardned from the fear of God, as the Church complains. There is indeed no better frame of Heart to be attained in this Life, then that, whereby it is to the Word, as the Wax to the Seal, fit and ready to receive Impreſſions from it. A Frame that is tender to receive the Communications of the Word in all their Variety, whether for Reproof, Inſtruction or Conſolation; and the want hereof, is a culpable Hardneſs of Heart.

2. THERE belongs unto it an Affectedneſs with the guilt of Sin, as unto the ſorrow

ſorrow and Repentance that it doth require. There is none in whom there is any ſpark of ſaving Grace, but hath a gracious ſorrow for Sin, in ſome degree or other; but there is a Proportion required between Sin and Sorrow. Great Sins require great Sorrows; as *Peter* on his great ſin, wept bitterly. And all, eſpecial Aggravations of Sin, require an eſpecial ſenſe of them. This the Soul finds not in it ſelf. It bears the Thoughts of Sin, and the Rebukes of Conſcience, without any great concuſſion or remorſe. It can paſs over the charge of ſin, without relenting, mourning, diſſolving in Sighs and Tears; and it cannot but ſay ſometimes thereon, that its heart is like the Adamant or the Flint in the Rock; this makes many fear, that they are under the Dominion of Sin; and they fear it the more, becauſe that fear doth not affect and humble them as it ought. And it muſt be granted, that all unaffectedneſs with ſin, all want of Humiliation and godly Sorrow upon it, is from an undue hardneſs of Heart. And they, who are not affected with it, have great reaſon to be jealous over themſelves, as even unto their ſpiritual State and Condition.

3. OF

3. OF the ſame kind in its meaſure, is unaffectedneſs with the Sins of others, among whom we live, or in whom we are concerned. To mourn for the ſins of others, is a duty highly approved of God; *Ezek.* ix. It argues the effectual working of many Graces, as Zeal for the Glory of God, Compaſſion for the Souls of Men, Love to the Glory and Intereſt of Chriſt in the World. The want hereof is from hardneſs of Heart, and it is that which abounds among us. Some find not themſelves at all concerned herein, ſome make pretences why they need not ſo be, or, that it is not their Duty; what is it unto them how wicked the World is, it ſhall anſwer for its own Sins. Nor are they moved when it comes nearer them. If their Children come to Loſſes, Ruine, Poverty, then they are affected indeed. But ſo long as they flouriſh in the World, be they Apoſtates from Profeſſion, be they Enemies to Chriſt, do they avowedly belong unto the World, and walk in the ways of it; they are not much concerned, eſpecially if they are not ſcandalouſly Profligate. But this alſo is from Hardneſs of Heart, which will be bewail'd, where Grace is vigilant and active.

4. WANT

4. WANT of a due ſenſe of Indications of divine diſpleaſure, is another Inſtance of this Hardneſs of Heart. God doth oft-times give ſigns and tokens hereof; whether as unto the publick State of the Church in the World, or, as unto our own Perſons, in Afflictions and Chaſtiſements. In the ſeaſons hereof, he expects that our Hearts ſhould be ſoft and tender, ready to receive Impreſſions of his Anger, and pliable therein unto his Mind and Will. There are none whom at ſuch a time he doth more abhorr, than thoſe who are ſtout-hearted, little regarding him or the Operation of his Hands. This in ſome meaſure may be in Believers; and they may be ſenſible of it, to their Sorrow and Humiliation.

THESE things, and many more of the like nature, proceed from Hardneſs of Heart, or the remainder of our hardneſs by nature, and are great promoters of the Intereſt of Sin in us. But where any Perſons are ſenſible of this Frame, where they are humbled for it, where they mourn under and cry out for its removal, it is ſo far from being an Evidence of the Dominion of Sin over them, in whom it is, that it is an eminent ſign of the contrary; namely,

namely, that the ruling Power of Sin is certainly broken and deſtroyed in the Soul.

BUT there are other Inſtances of Hardneſs of Heart, which have much more difficulty in them, and which are hardly reconcilable unto the Rule of Grace. I ſhall mention ſome of them.

1. SECURITY and ſenſeleſs under the guilt of great actual Sins. I do not ſay this is or can at any time be abſolute in any Believer. But ſuch it may be, as whereon men may go on at their old Pace of Duties and Profeſſion, though without any peculiar Humiliation, albeit they are under the provoking guilt of ſome known ſin, with its Aggravations. It will recurr upon their Minds and Conſcience, (unleſs it be ſeared) will treat with them about it. But they paſs it over, as that which they had rather forget, and wear out of their minds, then bring things unto their proper Iſſue by particular Repentance. So it ſeems to have been with *David* after his Sin with *Bathſheba*. I doubt not but that before the meſſage of God to him by *Nathan*, he had unpleaſing Thoughts of what he had done. But there is not the leaſt Footſteps in the Story, or any of his Prayers, that he laid it ſeriouſly to heart, and was humbled for

it

it before. This was a great Hardneſs of Heart, and we know how difficult his Recovery from it was. *He was ſaved but as through Fire.* And where it is ſo with any one, that hath been overtaken with any great Sin, as Drunkenneſs or other Folly, that he ſtrives to wear it out, to paſs it over, to forget it, or give himſelf Countenance from any reaſoning or conſideration againſt the eſpecial ſenſe of it, and humiliation for it; he can, during that State and Frame, have no ſolid Evidence, that Sin hath not the Dominion in him. And let ſuch Sinners be warned, who have ſo paſſed over former Sins, until they have utterly loſt all ſenſe of them, or are under ſuch a Frame at preſent; that they recal things to another Account, and ſuffer no ſuch Sin to paſs without a peculiar Humiliation, or whatever be the final Iſſue of things with them, they can have no ſolid ground of ſpiritual Peace in this World.

2. THERE is ſuch a dangerous Hardneſs of Heart, where the guilt of one Sin makes not the Soul watchful againſt another of another ſort. Where-ever the Heart is tender, upon a ſurprizal into Sin, it will not only watch againſt the returns thereof, or relapſes into it, but will be made diligent,

gent, heedful and careful againſt all other Sins whatever. So is it with all that walk humbly under a ſenſe of ſin. But when Men in ſuch a ſtate are careleſs, bold and negligent, ſo as that if they repeat not the ſame ſin, they are eaſily hurried into others. Thus was it with *Aſa*; he was wroth with the *Prophet* that came unto him with a divine Meſſage, and ſmote him, and caſt him in Priſon, for he was in a Rage, 2 *Chron.* xvi. 10. A Man would think that when he was recovered out of this Diſtemper, it might have made him humble and watchful againſt other Sins: But it was not ſo; for, it is added, that he oppreſſed ſome of the People at the ſame time; and he reſted not there, but *in his Diſeaſe he ſought not to the Lord, but unto Phyſicians*; unto Perſecution he added Oppreſſion, and unto that Unbelief. *v.* 12. Yet notwithſtanding all this, the Heart of *Aſa* was *perfect with the Lord all his days*, 1 *Kings* xv. 14. that is, he had a prevalent Sincerity in him notwithſtanding theſe Miſcarriages. But he was doubtleſs under the Power of great Hardneſs of Heart. So is it with others in the like Caſes, when one ſin makes them not careful and watchful againſt another. As

when men have ſtained themſelves with Intemperance of Life, they may fall into Exceſs of Paſſion in their Families and Relations; or into a neglect of Duty, or take any other crooked ſteps in their walk. This argues a great Prevalency of Sin in the Soul, although as we ſee in the Example of *Aſa*, it is not an infallible Evidence of its Dominion; yet of that nature it is, wherewith divine Peace and Conſolation are inconſiſtent.

3. WHEN men fall into ſuch unſpiritual Frames, ſuch deadneſs and decays, as from which they are not recoverable by the ordinary means of Grace; it is a certain Evidence of Hardneſs of Heart, and the Prevalency of Sin therein. It is ſo, whether this be the fault of Churches or of particular Perſons? The Preaching of the Word, is the eſpecial divine Ordinance for the healing and recovery of Backſliders in Heart or Life. Where this will not effect it in any, but they will *go on frowardly in the ways of their own hearts*, unleſs God take ſome extraordinary courſe with them, they are on the brink of *Ruine*, and live on ſovereign Grace alone.

THUS was it with *David*. After his great Sin, there is no doubt but he attended

tended unto all Ordinances of divine Worſhip, which are the ordinary means of the preſervation and recovery of Sinners from their Backſlidings. Howbeit they had not this effect upon him; he lived impenitently in his Sin, until God was pleaſed to uſe extraordinary means in the eſpecial Meſſage of *Nathan*, and the Death of his Child, for his awakening and recovery.

AND thus God will deal ſometimes with Churches and Perſons. Where ordinary means for their recovery will not effect it, he will by ſovereign Grace, and it may be by a concurrence of Extraordinary Providence, heal, revive and ſave them. So he promiſeth to do, *Iſa.* lvij. 16, 17, 18, 19.

BUT where this is truſted unto, in the neglect of the ordinary means of healing, ſeeing there is no direct Promiſe of it, but it is a Caſe reſerved unto abſolute ſoveraignty, the End may be bitterneſs and ſorrow.

AND let them take heed who are under this Frame: For although God may deliver them, yet it will be by *terrible things*; as *Pſal.* lxv. 5. Such terrible things as wherein he will take Vengeance of their Inventions, *Pſal.* xcix. 8. though he do for-

give them: So *David* affirms of himſelf, that God in his dealing with him, had broken all his Bones, *Pſal.* li. 8.

I fear this is the preſent Caſe of many Churches and Profeſſors at this day. It is evident that they are fallen under many ſpiritual decays. Neither have the ordinary means of Grace, Repentance and Humiliation, though backed with various providential Warnings, been efficacious to their recovery. It is greatly to be feared that God will uſe ſome ſevere Diſpenſation in terrible things towards them for their awakning; or, which is more dreadful, withdraw his Preſence from them.

4. OF the ſame Nature it is, and argues no ſmall Power of this Evil, when men ſatisfie and pleaſe themſelves in an unmortified, unfruitful Profeſſion; a ſevere Symptom of the Dominion of Sin. And there are Three things that manifeſt the conſiſtency of ſuch a Profeſſion, with Hardneſs of Heart; or, are fruits of it therein.

1. A neglect of the principal duties of it. Such are mortification in themſelves, and uſefulneſs or fruitfulneſs towards others. A Deficiency and Neglect in theſe things, are evident amongſt many that profeſs

feſs Religion. It doth not appear that in any thing they ſeriouſly endeavour the Mortification of their Luſts, their Pride, their Paſſion, their Love of the World, their inordinate Deſires and ſenſual Appetites. They either indulge unto them all, or, at leaſt, they maintain not a conſtant Conflict againſt them. And, as unto uſefulneſs in the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are to the Praiſe of God by Jeſus Chriſt, or thoſe good Works, which are the Evidence of a living Faith, they are openly barren in them. Now, whereas theſe are the principal Dictates of that Religion which they do profeſs, their neglect of them, their deficiency in them proceeds from an Hardneſs of Heart, over-powering their Light and Convictions. And what ſhall long, in ſuch a Caſe, ſtop Sins out of the Throne? Self-pleaſing and ſatisfaction in ſuch a Profeſſion, argues a very dangerous State and Habit of Mind. Sin may have a full Dominion under ſuch a Profeſſion.

2. THE admiſſion of an habitual Formality into the performance of religious Duties, is of the ſame nature. In ſome the Power of Sin (as we obſerved before) prevails unto the Neglect and Omiſſion of ſuch Duties. Others continue the Obſervation,

but are ſo formal and lifeleſs in them, ſo careleſs, as unto the exerting or exerciſe of Grace in them, as gives an uncontroulable Evidence of the Power of Sin, and a ſpiritual ſenſeleſneſs of Heart. There is nothing that the Scripture doth more frequently and ſeverely condemn, nor give as a Character of Hypocrites, than a diligent Attendance unto a multiplication of Duties, whilſt the Heart is not ſpiritually engaged in them. For this cauſe the Lord *Chriſt* threatned the utter Rejection of the Luke-warm Church of *Laodicea*. And God pronounceth a moſt ſevere Sentence againſt all that are guilty of it, *Iſa.*xxix.13,14. Yet thus it may be with many, and that thus it hath been with them, many do manifeſt by their open Apoſtacy, which is the common Event of this Frame and Courſe long continued in; for ſome in the daily performance of religious Duties for a ſeaſon, do exerciſe and preſerve their Gifts, but there being no exerciſe of Grace in them, after a while thoſe Gifts alſo do wither and decay. They are under the Power of the Evil whereof we treat, namely, an hard and ſenſeleſs Heart, that can approve of themſelves in ſuch a lifeleſs, heartleſs Profeſſion of Religion and performance of the Duties thereof. 3. When

3. WHEN Men grow ſenſeleſs under the Diſpenſation of the Word, and do not at all profit by it. The general Ends for preaching the Word unto Believers are (1.) The encreaſe of ſpiritual Light, Knowledge and Underſtanding in them. (2.) The growth of Grace enabling to Obedience. (3.) Holy Excitation of Grace by Impreſſions of its Power in the Communication of the Mind, Will, Love and Grace of God unto our Souls, which is attended with (4.) An Impreſſion on the Affections, renewing and making them more holy and heavenly continually; with (5.) Direction and Adminiſtration of ſpiritual ſtrength againſt Temptations and Corruptions; and (6.) Fruitfulneſs in the Works and Duties of Obedience.

WHERE Men can abide under the Diſpenſation of the Word, without any of theſe effects on their Minds, Conſciences or Lives; they are greatly hardened by the deceitfulneſs of Sin; as *Heb.* iij. 12, 13. this Caſe is ſtated. Now whether this be,

1. FROM that careleſneſs and ſecurity which is grown on all ſorts of Perſons, againſt which God doth juſtly expreſs his Indignation, by with-holding the Power

and Efficacy of his Word, in its Adminiſtration from them: Or,

2. FROM an encreaſe of an unſanctified Light and Gifts, which fill men with high thoughts of themſelves, and keep them off from that humble Frame which alone is teachable: Or,

3. FROM a loſs of all due Reverence unto the Miniſtry, as God's Ordinance for all the ends of the Word, with a ſecret Fortification of Conſcience by Prejudices againſt its Power, from the Suggeſtions of Sathan: Or,

4. FROM the love of Sin, which the Heart would ſhelter and ſecure from the Efficacy of the Word; or from what other cauſe ſoever it be, it proceeds from a dangerous hardneſs of Heart, from the Power of Sin.

WHERE this is the ſtate of the Minds of Men, where this hardneſs is thus prevalent in them, I do not, no Man can give them aſſurance that Sin hath not the Dominion in them. But becauſe all theſe things are capable of various degrees, it may not be concluded abſolutely from any or all of them in any degree, that ſo it is. But this we may ſafely conclude, (1.) That it is impoſſible for any Man in whom this evil

evil Frame is found in any degree, and not ſincerely endeavoured againſt, to keep any true ſolid Peace with God, or in his own Soul; What ſeems to be ſo in him is but a ruinous Security. (2.) That this is the high road unto final Obduration and Impenitency; and therefore, (3.) it is the preſent Duty of thoſe who have any care of their Souls, to ſhake themſelves out of this Duſt, and not to give themſelves any reſt, until they are entered into the Paths of Recovery. The Calls of God for a Return unto ſuch Backſliders in Heart are multiplied, the Reaſons for it and Motives unto it are innumerable; this ought never to depart from their minds, that without it they ſhall eternally Periſh, and know not how ſoon they may be overtaken with that Deſtruction.

THUS far have we proceeded in the enquiry, Whether Sin hath the Dominion in us or no? There are on the other ſide many Evidences of the Rule of Grace, ſufficient to diſcard the Pleas and Pretences of Sin unto the Throne: But the conſideration of them is not my preſent Deſign; I have only examined the Pleas of Sin, which render the Enquiry difficult and the Caſe dubious. And they ariſe all

all from the actings of Sin in us, as it fights againſt the Soul, which is its proper and conſtant work, 1 *Pet.* ij. 11, 12. It doth ſo againſt the deſign of the Law, which is to live to God; againſt the Order and Peace of it, which it diſturbs; and againſt its eternal Bleſſedneſs, which it would deprive it of. The Examination of the Pretences inſiſted on, may be of ſome uſe to them that are ſincere.

BUT on the other hand, there are uncontroulable Evidences of the Dominion of Sin in Men, ſome whereof I ſhall mention, and only mention, becauſe they need neither Proof nor Illuſtration.

(1.) IT is ſo where Sin hath poſſeſſed the Will. And it hath poſſeſſed the Will, when there are no reſtraints from ſinning taken from its Nature but its Conſequents only. (2.) When Men proclaim their Sins, and hide them not; when they boaſt in in them, and of them, as it is with multitudes; or, (3.) approve of themſelves in any known Sin, without renewed Repentance; as Drunkenneſs, Uncleanneſs, Swearing and the like: Or, (4.) Live in the Neglect of religious Duties in their Cloſſets and Families; whence all their publick Attendance unto them is but Hypocriſy:

criſy: Or, (5.) Have an Enmity to true Holineſs, and the Power of Godlineſs: Or, (6.) Are viſible Apoſtates from Profeſſion, eſpecially if they add, as is uſual, Perſecution to their Apoſtacy: Or, (7.) Are ignorant of the ſanctifying Principles of the Goſpel and Chriſtian Religion: Or, (8.) Are Diſpiſers of the means of Converſion: Or, (9.) Live in ſecurity under open providential Warnings and Calls to Repentance: Or, (10.) Are Enemies in their Minds unto the true Intereſt of Chriſt in the World. Where theſe things and the like are found, there is no Queſtion what it is that hath Dominion, and bears Rule in the Minds of Men. This all Men may eaſily know, as the Apoſtle declares, *Rom.* vi. 16.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Third Enquiry handled, viz. *What is the assurance given us, and what are the Grounds thereof, that Sin shall not have Dominion over us?*

The Ground of this assurance is, That we are not under the Law but Grace. *The Force of this Reason shewed,* viz. *How the Law doth not destroy the Dominion of Sin, and how Grace dethrowns Sin and gives Dominion over it.*

AND thus much hath been spoken unto the *Second* thing proposed at the Entrance of this Discourse; namely, an Enquiry, Whether Sin have the Dominion in any of us or no? I proceed unto that which offers it self from the words in the *Third* Place; What is the assurance given us, and what are the Grounds of it, that Sin shall not have Dominion over us; which lies in this, That we are *not under the Law, but under Grace.*

WHERE Men are engaged in a constant Conflict against Sin, where they look upon it, and judge it their chiefest Enemy, which contends with them for their Souls, and

and their eternal Ruine; where they have Experience of its Power and Deceit, and, through the Efficacy of them, have been often ſhaken in their Peace and Comfort; where they have been ready to deſpond, and ſay, They ſhall One Day periſh under their Powers: It is a Goſpel Word, a Word of good Tidings that gives them Aſſurance, that it ſhall never have *Dominion* over them.

THE Ground of this Aſſurance is, That Believers are *not under the Law, but under Grace*. And the force of this Reaſon we may manifeſt in ſome few Inſtances.

1. THE *Law* giveth no ſtrength againſt Sin unto them that are under it; but *Grace* doth. Sin will neither be caſt nor kept out of its Throne, but by a ſpiritual Power, and ſtrength in the Soul, to oppoſe, conquer and dethrown it. Where it is not conquered it will reign; and conquered it will not be, without a mighty prevailing Power: This the *Law* will not, cannot give.

THE *Law* is taken Two ways. (1.) For the whole Revelation of the Mind and Will of God in the *Old Teſtament*. In this Sence it had *Grace* in it, and ſo did give both Life, and Light, and ſtrength againſt

Sin

Sin, as the *Pſalmiſt* declares, *Pſal.* xix. 7, 8, 9. In that ſence it contained not only the Law of Precepts, but the Promiſe alſo, and the Covenant which was the means of conveying ſpiritual Life and Strength unto the Church, in this ſence it is not here ſpoken of; nor is any where oppoſed unto *Grace*. (2.) For the Covenant Rule of perfect Obedience, do this and live. In this ſence men are ſaid to be under it in oppoſition unto being under Grace. They are under its Power, Rule, Conditions and Authority as a Covenant. And in this ſence all men are under it, who are not enſtated in the New Covenant through Faith in Chriſt Jeſus, who ſets up in them and over them the Rule of Grace. For all Men muſt be one way or other under the Rule of God; and he rules only by the *Law*, or by *Grace*: And none can be under both at the ſame time.

IN this ſence the Law was never ordained of God, to convey Grace or ſpiritual Strength unto the Souls of Men: Had it been ſo, the Promiſe and the Goſpel had been needleſs. If there had been a Law given *which could have given Life, verily Righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the Law*, *Gal.* iij. 21. If it could have given Life

Life or Strength, it would have produced Righteouſneſs, we ſhould have been juſtified by it. It diſcovers Sin and condemns it, but gives no Strength to oppoſe it. It is not God's Ordinance for the dethrowning of Sin, nor for the Deſtruction of its Dominion.

THIS Law falls under a double conſideration; but in neither of them was deſigned to give Power or Strength againſt Sin.

1. AS it was given unto Mankind in the ſtate of Innocency. And it did then abſolutely and exactly declare the whole Duty of Man, whatever God in his Wiſdom and Holineſs did require of us. It was God's Ruling of men according to the Principle of the Righteouſneſs wherein he was created. But it gave no new aids againſt Sin; nor was there any need that ſo it ſhould do. It was not the Ordinance of God to adminiſter new or more Grace unto Man, but to rule and govern him according to what he had perceived. And this it continueth to do for ever. It claims and continues a Rule over all Men, according to what they had, and what they have. But it never had power to barr the Entrance of Sin, or to caſt it out when it is once Enthroned. 2*dly*. AS

2*dly*. AS it was renewed and enjoined unto the Church of *Iſrael* on Mount *Sinai*, and with them unto all that would join themſelves unto the Lord out of the Nations of the World. Yet neither was it then, nor as ſuch, deſigned unto any ſuch End, as to deſtroy or dethrone Sin, by an Adminiſtration of ſpiritual Strength and Grace. It had ſome new Ends given then unto it, which it had not in its original Conſtitution. The principal whereof was to drive men to the Promiſe and Chriſt therein. And this it doth by all the Acts and Powers of it on the Souls of Men. As it diſcovers Sin, as it irritates and provokes it by its ſeverity, as it judgeth and condemneth it, as it denounceth a Curſe on Sinners, it drives unto this End. For this was added of Grace in the Renovation of it; this new End was given unto it; in it ſelf it hath nothing to do with Sinners, but to Judge, Curſe, and Condemn them.

THERE is therefore no help to be expected againſt the Dominion of Sin from the Law. It was never ordained of God unto that End; nor doth it contain, nor is it communicative of the Grace neceſſary unto that End, *Rom.* viij. 3.

WHERE-

WHEREFORE thoſe who are under the Law, are under the Dominion of Sin. The Law is holy, but it cannot make them holy, who have made themſelves unholy: It is juſt, but it cannot make them ſo; it cannot juſtify them whom it doth condemn: It is good, but can do them no good, as unto their deliverance from the Power of Sin; God hath not appointed it unto that End. Sin will never be dethroned by it; it will not give place unto the Law; neither in its Title, nor its Power.

THOSE who are under the Law, will at ſome ſeaſons endeavour to ſhake off the Yoke of Sin, and reſolve to be no longer under its Power. As,

1. WHEN the Law preſſeth on their Conſciences, perplexing and diſquieting of them. The Commandment comes home unto them, Sin *reviveth* and they *die*, *Rom.* vij. 9, 10. That is, it gives power to Sin to ſlay the hopes of the Sinner, and to diſtreſs him with the Apprehenſion of Guilt and Death. For the ſtrength of Sin is the Law, 1 *Cor.* xv. 56. The Power it hath to diſquiet and condemn Sinners, is in and by the Law. When it is thus with Sinners, when the

Law presseth them with a sense of the Guilt of Sin, and deprives them of all Rest and Peace in their minds; they will resolve to cast off the Yoke of Sin, to relinquish its service, that they may be freed from the Urgency of the Law on their Consciences. And they will endeavour it in some Instances of Duty, and Abstinence from Sin.

2. THEY will do the same under surprizals with Sickness, Pain, Dangers, or Death it self. Then they will cry, and pray, and promise to reform, and set about it, as they suppose, in good earnest. This Case is fully exemplified, *Psal.* lxxviij. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. And it is manifest in daily Experience amongst multitudes. There are few who are so seared and profligate, but at such Seasons they will think of returning to God, of relinquishing the service of Sin, and vindicating themselves from under its Dominion. And in some it worketh a lasting Change, though no real Conversion doth ensue. But with the most, this *Goodness is as the morning Cloud, and as the early Dew, so passeth it away.*

3. THE same Effect is produced in many by the preaching of the Word. Some Arrow of Conviction is fastened in

their

their Minds, whereon their former ways diſpleaſe them; and they judge it is better for them to change the Courſe of their Lives, and to relinquiſh the ſervice of Sin: Theſe Reſolutions for the moſt part abide with them, according to the Society which they have or fall into. Good Society may much help them in their Reſolves for a time; when by that which is evil and corrupt they are preſently extinguiſhed.

4. SOMETIMES merciful, endearing Providences will have the ſame effect on the Minds of Men, not obdurate in Sin. Such are deliverances from imminent dangers, ſparing the lives of near Relations and the like.

IN ſuch ſeaſons Men under the Law will attend unto their Convictions, and endeavour for a while to ſhake off the Yoke of Sin. They will attend unto what the Law ſaith, under whoſe Power they are, and endeavour a compliance therewith; many duties ſhall be performed, and many Evils abſtained from, in order to the quitting themſelves of Sin's Dominion. But alas the Law cannot enable them hereunto: It cannot give them life and ſtrength to go through with what their Convictions preſs them unto; there-

fore, after a while, they begin to faint and wax weary in their Progreſs, and at length give quite over. It may be they may break off from ſome great Sins in particular; but ſhake off the Whole Dominion of Sin they cannot.

IT is otherwiſe with them that are under *Grace*. Sin ſhall not have Dominion over them; ſtrength ſhall be adminiſtred unto them to dethrone it.

GRACE is a word of various Acceptations in the Scripture. As we are here ſaid to be under it, and as it is oppoſed unto the Law, it is uſed or taken for the Goſpel, as it is the Inſtrument of God for the Communication of himſelf, and his Grace by Jeſus Chriſt unto thoſe that do believe, with that ſtate of Acceptation with himſelf, which they are brought into thereby, *Rom.* v. 1, 2. Wherefore to be *under Grace*, is to have an Intereſt in the Goſpel Covenant and State, with a Right unto all the Privileges and Benefits thereof, to be brought under the Adminiſtration of Grace by Jeſus Chriſt, to be a true Believer.

BUT the Enquiry hereon is, how it follows from hence, that Sin ſhall not have Dominion over us; that Sin cannot extend its Territories and Rule into that ſtate;

ſtate; and in what ſence this is affirmed?

1. IS it that there ſhall be no Sin in them any more? Even this is true in ſome ſence. Sin, as unto its condemning Power, hath no place in this State, *Rom.* viij. 1. All the ſins of them that believe are expiated or done away, as to the guilt of them in the Blood of Chriſt, *Heb.* i. 2. 1 *Joh.* i. 7. This branch of the Dominion of Sin, which conſiſts in its condemning Power, is utterly caſt out of this ſtate. But Sin, as unto its Being and Operation doth ſtill continue in Believers, whilſt they are in this World: They are all ſenſible of it. Thoſe who deceive themſelves with a contrary apprehenſion, are moſt of all under the Power of it, 1 *Joh.* i. 8. Wherefore to be freed from the Dominion of Sin, is not to be freed abſolutely from all Sin; ſo as that it ſhould in no ſence abide in us any more. This is not to be *under Grace*, but to be in Glory.

2. IS it that ſin, though it abides, yet it ſhall not fight nor contend for Dominion in us? That this is otherwiſe, we have before declared; Scripture and the univerſal Experience of all that believe, do teſtifie the contrary: So doth the aſſu-

rance here given us, that it ſhall not obtain that Dominion. For if it did not contend for it, there could be no Grace in this Promiſe. There is none in Deliverance from that whereof we are in no danger.

BUT the Aſſurance here given is built on other Conſiderations; whereof the *Firſt* is, That the Goſpel is the means ordained, and Inſtrument uſed by God for the Communication of ſpiritual ſtrength unto them that believe, for the dethroning of Sin. It is the *Power of God unto Salvation*, *Rom.* i. 16. that whereby and wherein he puts forth his Power unto that end. And Sin muſt be really dethroned by the powerful acting of Grace in us, and that in a way of duty in our ſelves. We are abſolved, quitted, freed from the Rule of Sin, as unto its pretended Right and Title, by the Promiſe of the Goſpel. For thereby are we freed and diſcharged from the Rule of the Law, wherein all the Title of Sin unto Dominion is founded. For the ſtrength of Sin is the Law. But we are freed from it, as unto its internal Power, and exerciſe of its Dominion, by internal ſpiritual Grace and ſtrength in its due exerciſe. Now this is communicated by the Goſpel;

Goſpel; it gives Life and Power, with ſuch continual ſupplies of Grace, as are able to dethrone Sin, and for ever to prohibit its return.

THIS then is the preſent Caſe ſuppoſed and determined by the Apoſtle. You that are Believers, are all of you conflicting with Sin. You find it always reſtleſs and diſquieting, ſometimes ſtrong and powerful. When it is in conjunction with any urgent Temptation, you are affraid it will utterly prevail over you to the ruine of your Souls. Hence you are wearied with it, groan under it, and cry out for deliverance from it. All theſe things the *Apoſtle* at large inſiſts on in this and the *next Chapter*. But now, ſaith he, be of good comfort. Notwithſtanding all theſe things, and all your Fears upon them, Sin ſhall not prevail, it ſhall not have the Dominion, it ſhall never ruine your Souls. But what Ground have we for this Hope? What Aſſurance of this Succeſs? This you have, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, You are *not under the Law, but under Grace*; or, the Rule of the Grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus, adminiſtred in the Goſpel. But how doth this give relief? Why it is the Ordinance, the Inſtrument of God which he will uſe unto

this End, namely the Communication of ſuch ſupplies of Grace and ſpiritual ſtrength, as ſhall eternally defeat the Dominion of Sin.

THIS is one principal Difference between the Law and the Goſpel, and was everſo eſteemed in the Church of God, until all Communication of Efficacious Grace began to be called in Queſtion. The Law guides, directs, commands all things that are againſt the Intereſt and Rule of Sin. It judgeth and condemneth both the things that promote it, and the Perſons that do them: It frightens and terrifies the Conſciences of thoſe who are under its Dominion. But if you ſhall ſay unto it, what then ſhall we do? this Tyrant, this Enemy, is too hard for us; what aid and aſſiſtance againſt it will it afford unto us? What power will it communicate unto its deſtruction? Here the Law is utterly ſilent, or ſays, that nothing of this nature is committed unto it of God. Nay, the ſtrength it hath it gives unto ſin for the Condemnation of the Sinner; the *ſtrength of Sin is the Law.*

BUT the Goſpel, or the grace of it, is the means and Inſtrument of God, for the Communication of internal ſpiritual Strength

Strength unto Believers. By it do they receive ſupplies of the Spirit, or aids of Grace for the ſubduing of Sin, and the deſtruction of its Dominion. By it they may ſay, they can do all things through him that enables them. Hereon then depends in the firſt place the Aſſurance of the *Apoſtles* Aſſertion, That *Sin ſhall not have the Dominion over us*, becauſe we are *under Grace*. We are in ſuch a State, as wherein we have ſupplies in readineſs to defeat all the Attempts of Sin, for Rule and Dominion in us.

BUT ſome may ſay hereon, They greatly fear they are not in this ſtate; for they do not find ſuch ſupplies of ſpiritual Strength and Grace, as to give them a conqueſt over ſin. They are ſtill perplexed with it, and it is ready to invade the Throne in their Minds, if it be not already poſſeſſed of it. Wherefore they fear leaſt they are ſtrangers from the Grace of the Goſpel.

IN Anſwer hereunto, the Things enſuing are propoſed.

1. REMEMBER what hath been declared concerning the Dominion of Sin. If it be not known what it is, and wherein it doth conſiſt, as ſome may pleaſe themſelves,

ſelves, whilſt their condition is deplorable, as it is with the moſt; ſo others may be perplexed in their Minds without juſt Cauſe. A clear deſtinction between the Rebellion of Sin and the Dominion of Sin, is a great Advantage unto ſpiritual Peace.

2. CONSIDER the Ends for which aids of Grace are granted and communicated by the Goſpel. Now this is not, That Sin may at once be utterly deſtroyed and conſumed in us, that it ſhould have no Being, Motion, or Power in us any more. This work is reſerved for glory in the full Redemption of Body and Soul, which we here do but groan after. But it is given unto us for this End, that ſin may be ſo crucified and mortified in us, that is, ſo gradually weakened and deſtroyed, as that it ſhall not ruine ſpiritual Life in us, obſtruct its neceſſary acting in duties, and Prevalency againſt ſuch Sins as would diſannul the Covenant-Relation between God and our Souls. Whilſt we have ſupplies of it which are ſufficient unto this End, although our Conflict with Sin doth continue, although we are perplexed by it; yet we are *under Grace*, and Sin ſhall have no more Dominion over us. This is enough for us, that Sin ſhall be gradually deſtroyed, and we

ſhall

ſhall have a ſufficiency of Grace in all occaſions to prevent its ruling Prevalency.

3. LIVE in the Faith of this ſacred Truth, and ever keep alive in your Souls Expectation of ſupplies of Grace ſuitable thereunto. It is of the nature of true and ſaving Faith, inſeparable from it, to believe, that the Goſpel is the way of God's Adminiſtration of Grace for the ruine of Sin. He that believes it not, believes not the Goſpel it ſelf, which is the Power of God unto Salvation, *Rom.* i. 16. If we live, and walk, and act as if we had nothing to truſt unto but our ſelves, our own Endeavours, our own Reſolutions, and that in our perplexities and ſurprizals, it is no wonder if we are not ſenſible of ſupplies of divine Grace; moſt probably we are *under the Law*, and not *under Grace*. This is the Fundamental Principle of the Goſpel State, that we live in Expectation of continual Communications of Life, Grace and Strength from Jeſus Chriſt, who is our Life, and from whoſe fulneſs we receive, and Grace for Grace. We may therefore in this Caſe continually expoſtulate with our Souls, as *David* doth; Why go you mourning becauſe of the Oppreſſion of the Enemy? Why are you caſt down, and why

why are you diſquieted within us? Still hope in God, he is the health of my Countenance; we may be ſenſible of great Oppreſſion from the Power of this Enemy; this may cauſe us to go mourning all the day long, and in ſome ſence it ought ſo to do. Howbeit we ought not hence to deſpond, or to be caſt down from our Duty or our Comfort. Still we may truſt in God through Chriſt, and live in continual Expectation of ſuch ſpiritual Reliefs, as ſhall aſſuredly preſerve us from the Dominion of Sin. This Faith, Hope, and Expectation we are called unto by the Goſpel. And when they are not cheriſhed, when they are not kept up unto a due Exerciſe, all things will go backward in our ſpiritual Condition.

4. MAKE eſpecial Application unto the Lord Chriſt, unto whom the Adminiſtration of all ſpiritual ſupplies is committed, for the Communication of them unto you, according unto all eſpecial Occaſions. Hath ſin got the advantage of a powerful Temptation, ſo as that it ſeems to put hard for Dominion in the Soul, as it was with *Paul* under the buffetings of Sathan, when he had that anſwer from God upon his reiterated Prayer, *My Grace is ſufficient for*

for thee, Sin ſhall not have Dominion over thee? Hath it by its deceitfulneſs brought the Soul into a lifeleſs, ſenſeleſs frame, makes it forgetful of Duties, negligent in them, or without ſpiritual delight in their performance? Hath it almoſt habituated the Soul unto careleſs and corrupt Inclinations unto the love, of or conformity to the World? Doth it take advantage from our darkneſs and confuſion under Troubles, Diſtreſſes or Temptations? On theſe and the like Occaſions it is required, that we make eſpecial, fervent Application unto the Lord Chriſt, for ſuch ſupplies of Grace as may be ſufficient and efficacious to controul the Power of ſin in them all. This under the conſideration of his Office and Authority unto this End, his Grace and readineſs from eſpecial Inducements, we are directed unto, *Heb.* iv. 14, 15, 16.

5. REMEMBER always the Way and Method of the Operations of divine Grace, and ſpiritual Aids. It is true in our firſt Converſion to God, we are as it were ſurprized by a mighty Act of ſovereign Grace, changing our hearts, renewing our minds, and quickening us with a principle of ſpiritual Life. Ordinarily many things are required

required of us in a way of Duty in order thereunto. And many previous Operations of Grace in our Minds in illumination, and the ſenſe of ſin do materially and paſſively diſpoſe us thereunto, as Wood when it is dried, is diſpoſed to Firing. But the work it ſelf is performed by an immediate act of divine power, without any active co-operation on our parts. But this is not the Law or Rule of the Communication or Operation of actual Grace, for the ſubduing of Sin. It is given in a way of concurrence with us in the diſcharge of our Duties, and when we are ſedulous in them, we may be ſure we ſhall not fail of divine aſſiſtance according to the eſtabliſhed Rule of the adminiſtration of Goſpel Grace. If therefore we complain that we find not the Aids mentioned, if at the ſame time we are not diligent in attendance unto all the Duties, whereby Sin may be mortified in us, we are exceedingly injurious to the Grace of God.

WHEREFORE notwithſtanding this Objection, the Truth ſtands firm, *that Sin ſhall not have Dominion over us, becauſe we are not under the Law, but under Grace*; becauſe of the ſpiritual Aids that are admini-

miniſtred by Grace, for its mortification and deſtruction.

Secondly, THE Law gives no Liberty of any kind; it gendreth unto Bondage, and ſo cannot free us from any Dominion, not that of Sin. For this muſt be by Liberty. But this we have alſo by the Goſpel. There is a two-fold Liberty; (1.) *Of State* and Condition; (2.) Of *internal Operation*. And we have both by the Goſpel. The firſt conſiſts in our deliverance from the Law and its Curſe, with all things which claim a Right againſt us by Virtue thereof; that is, Sathan, Death and Hell. Out of this ſtate from whence we can never be delivered by the Law, we are tranſlated by Grace into a ſtate of glorious Liberty. For, by it the Son makes us free, and we receive the Spirit of Chriſt. Now *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*, 1 *Cor.* iij. 17. This Liberty Chriſt proclaims in the Goſpel unto all that do believe, *Iſa.* lxi. 1. Hereon they who hear and receive the joyful ſound, are diſcharged from all Debts, Bonds, Accounts, Rights and Titles, and are brought into a ſtate of perfect Freedom. In this ſtate ſin can lay no Claim to Dominion over any one Soul. They are gone over into the Kingdom of

Chriſt, and out from the Power of Sin, Sathan and Darkneſs. Herein indeed lies the Foundation of our aſſured Freedom from the Rule of Sin. It cannot make an Incurſion on the Kingdom of Chriſt, ſo as to carry away any of its Subjects into a ſtate of Sin and Darkneſs again. And an Intereſt in this ſtate ought to be pleaded againſt all the Attempts of Sin, *Rom.* vi. 1, 2. There is nothing more to be deteſted, than that any One who is Chriſt's Freeman, and dead to the Power of Sin, ſhould give place again unto any of its Pretences to, or endeavours for Rule.

AGAIN, there is an *internal Liberty*, which is the Freedom of the mind, from the inward powerful Chains of Sin, with an ability to act all the Powers and Faculties of the Soul in a gracious manner. Hereby is the power of Sin in the Soul deſtroyed. And this alſo is given us in the Goſpel. There is power adminiſtred in it to live unto God, and to walk in all his Commandments. And this alſo gives Evidence unto the Truth of the Apoſtles Aſſertion.

Thirdly, THE Law doth not ſupply us with effectual Motives and Encouragements to endeavour the Ruine of the Do-

Dominion of Sin in a way of Duty, which muſt be done, or in the End it will prevail. It works only by fear and dread, with threatnings and terrors of Deſtruction. For although it ſays alſo, Do this and live, yet withal it diſcovers ſuch an impoſſibility in our Nature, to comply with its Commands in the way and manner wherein it enjoins them, that the very promiſe of it becomes a matter of Terror, as including the contrary Sentence of Death upon our Failure in its commands. Now theſe things enervate, weaken and diſcourage the Soul in its Conflict againſt Sin: They give it no Life, Activity, Chearfulneſs or Courage in what they undertake. Hence thoſe who engage themſelves into an Oppoſition unto Sin, or a Relinquiſhment of its Service, meerly on the Motives of the Law, do quickly faint and give over. We ſee it ſo with many every Day. One Day they will forſake all ſin, their beloved ſin, with the Company and Occaſions enducing them thereunto. The Law hath frighted them with divine Vengeance. And ſometimes they proceed ſo far in this Reſolution, they ſeem eſcaped the Pollution of the World; yet ſoon again they return to their former Ways and Follies,

2 *Pet.* ij. 20, 21, 22. Their goodneſs is as the morning Cloud, and as the early Dew ſo paſſeth it away. Or if they do not return to wallow in the ſame Mire of their former Pollutions, they betake themſelves to the ſhades of ſome ſuperſtitious Obſervances; as it is in the *Papacy*. For they openly ſucceed into the Room of the *Jews*, who being ignorant of the Righteouſneſs of God, and not ſubmitting thereunto, went about variouſly to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* x. 3, 4. For in that Apoſtate Church where men are wrought on by the Terrors of the Law to relinquiſh Sin, and ſet themſelves in oppoſition unto its Power, finding themſelves altogether unable to do it by the works of the Law it ſelf, which muſt be perfectly holy; they betake themſelves to a number of ſuperſtitious Obſervances which they truſt unto in the room of the Law, with its Commands and Duties. But the Law makes nothing perfect, nor are the Motives it gives for the ruine of the Intereſt of Sin in us, able to bear us out, and carry us through that undertaking.

BUT the Motives and Encouragements given by Grace to endeavour the utter ruine of ſin in a way of Duty, are ſuch as

as give Life, Chearfulneſs, Courage and Perſeverance, they continually animate, relieve and revive the Soul in all its Work and Duty, keeping it from fainting and deſpondency. For they are all taken from the Love of God and of Chriſt, from the whole Work and End of his Mediation, from the ready Aſſiſtances of the Holy Ghoſt, from all the Promiſes of the Goſpel, from their own with other Believers Experiences, all giving them the higheſt Aſſurance of final Succeſs and Victory. When the Soul is under the Influences of theſe Motives, whatever difficulty and oppoſition it meets withal from ſolliciting Temptations or Surprizals, it will renew its ſtrength, it will run and not be weary, it will walk and not faint, according to the Promiſe, *Iſa.* xl. 31.

Fourthly. CHRIST is not in the Law, he is not propoſed in it, not communicated by it, we are not made partakers of him thereby. This is the work of Grace, of the Goſpel. In it is Chriſt revealed, by it he is propoſed and exhibited unto us; thereby are we made partakers of him, and all the Benefits of his Mediation. And he it is alone who came to, and can deſtroy this Work of the Devil. The Dominion

of Sin is the complement of the Works of the Devil, where all his deſigns center. This *the Son of God was manifeſt to deſtroy*. He alone ruines the Kingdom of Sathan, whoſe power is acted in the Rule of Sin. Wherefore, hereunto our Aſſurance of this comfortable Truth, is principally reſolved; and what Chriſt hath done, and doth for this End, is a great part of the ſubject of Goſpel Revelation.

THE like may be ſpoken of the Communication of the Holy Spirit, which is the only principal efficient Cauſe of the ruine of the Dominion of Sin. For where the Spirit of Chriſt is, there is liberty, and no where elſe. But we receive this Spirit not by the works of the Law, but by the hearing of Faith, *Gal.* iij. 2.

CHAP. VI.

The Practical Obſervations drawn from, and Application made of, the whole Text.

HAVING opened the Words, and made ſome Improvement of them; I ſhall now take one or two Obſervations from the deſign of them, and iſſue the whole in a Word of Application. 1. IT

I. IT is an unſpeakable Mercy and Privilege to be delivered from the Dominion of Sin. As ſuch it is here propoſed by the Apoſtle, as ſuch it is eſteemed by them that believe. Nothing is more ſweet, precious and valuable unto a Soul conflicting with Sin and Temptation, than to hear that Sin ſhall not have the Dominion over them. Ah what would ſome give that it might be ſpoken unto them with Power, ſo as that they might ſtedfaſtly believe it, and have the Comfort of it. Fools make a mock of Sin, and ſome glory in the ſervice of it, which is their ſhame. But thoſe who underſtand any thing aright, either of what is preſent, or what is to come, do know that this freedom from its Dominion, is an unvaluable Mercy. And we may conſider the Grounds which Evidence it ſo to be.

1. IT appears ſo to be from the cauſes of it. It is that which no man can by his own Power, and the utmoſt of his Endeavours attain unto. Men by them may grow rich, or Wiſe, or Learned; but no Man by them can ſhake off the Yoke of Sin. If a Man had all the Wealth of the World, he could not by it purchaſe this Liberty; it would be deſpiſed. And when Sinners go hence

to the place where the Rich Man was tormented, and have nothing more to do with this World, they would give it all if they had it, for an Intereſt in this Liberty.

IT is that which the Law and all the Duties of it cannot procure. The Law and its Duties, as we have declared, can never deſtroy the Dominion of Sin. All Men will find the Truth hereof, that ever come to fall under the Power of real Conviction. When Sin preſſeth on them, and they are affraid of its Conſequents, they will find, that the Law is weak, and the Fleſh is weak, and their Duties are weak, their Reſolutions and Vows are weak; all inſufficient to relieve them. And if they think themſelves freed one day, they ſhall find the next that they are under Bondage; Sin for all this will rule over them with force and rigour. And in this condition do ſome ſpend all their Days in this World. They kindle ſparks of their own, and walk in the Light of them, until they lie down in darkneſs and ſorrow. They Sin and promiſe amendment, and endeavour Recompences by ſome Duties, yet can never extricate themſelves from the Yoke of Sin. We may therefore learn the Excellency of this Privilege

Privilege, firſt from its Cauſes, whereof I ſhall mention ſome only.

1. THE meritorious procuring Cauſe of this Liberty, is the Death and Blood of Jeſus Chriſt. So is it declared, 1 *Pet.* i. 18, 19. 1 *Cor.* vi. 20. *Chap.* vij. 23. Nothing elſe could purchaſe this Freedom. Under the Power and Dominion of Sin we were, and could not be delivered without a Ranſom. Chriſt died and roſe, and lives again, that he might be our Lord, *Rom.* xiv. 9. and ſo deliver us from the Power of all other Lords whatever. It is true there was no Ranſom due to Sin or Sathan, who was the Author of it. They were to be dethroned or deſtroyed by an Act of Power. Both the Devil, and Sin, which is his work, are to be deſtroyed not appeaſed, *Heb.* ij. 14. 1 *John* iij. 8. But the ſtrength of Sin is the Law, 1 *Cor.* xv. 56. that is, through the righteous Sentence of God, we were held by the Law obnoxious unto the condemning Power of Sin. From that Law we could not be delivered but by this Price and Ranſom. Two Things hence follow:

1. THOSE who live in Sin, who willingly abide in the ſervice of it, and endure its Dominion, do caſt the utmoſt

contempt on the Wiſdom, Love, and Grace of Chriſt. They deſpiſe that which coſt him ſo dear. They judge that he made a very fooliſh purchace of this Liberty for us, with his deareſt Blood. Whatever it be, they preferr the preſent ſatisfaction of their Luſts before it. This is the Poiſon of Unbelief. There is in it an high Contempt of the Wiſdom and Love of Chriſt. The Language of Mens Hearts that live in Sin, is, that the Liberty which he purchaſed with his Blood, is not to be valued or eſteemed. They flatter him with their Lips in the outward performance of ſome duties; but in their Hearts they deſpiſe him, and the whole work of his Mediation. But the time is approaching wherein they will learn the difference between the ſlavery of Sin, and the Liberty wherewith Chriſt makes Believers free. And this is that which is now tendred unto Sinners in the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel; Life and Death are here ſet before you, chuſe Life that ye may live for ever.

2. LET thoſe that are Believers in all their Conflicts with Sin, live in the exerciſe of Faith, on this purchace of Liberty made by the Blood of Chriſt. For two Things will hence enſue, (1.) That they will

will have a mighty Argument always in readineſs to oppoſe unto the Deceit and Violence of Sin. The Soul will hereon ſay to its ſelf, ſhall I forego and part with that which Chriſt purchaſed for me at ſo dear a rate, by giving place to the ſolicitations of Luſt or Sin? Shall I deſpiſe his purchace? God forbid. See *Rom.* vi. 2. By ſuch Arguings is the mind frequently preſerved from cloſing with the Enticements and Seductions of Sin. (2.) It is an effectual Argument for Faith to uſe in its pleading for deliverance from the Power of Sin. We ask for nothing but what Chriſt hath purchaſed for us. And if this Plea be purſued it will be prevalent.

2*dly*. THE internal efficient cauſe of this Liberty, or that whereby the Power and Rule of Sin is deſtroyed in us, is the Holy Spirit himſelf, which farther evinceth the greatneſs of this Mercy. Every act for the Mortification of Sin, is no leſs immediately from him, than thoſe poſitive Graces are, whereby we are ſanctified. It is through the Spirit that we mortify the deeds of the Fleſh, *Rom.* viij. 13. Where he is, there and there alone is Liberty. All attempts for the Mortification of Sin without his eſpecial aids and

Opera-

Operations, are fruſtrate. And this manifeſts the Extent of the Dominion of Sin in the World. He alone by whom it can be deſtroyed, and all thoſe efficacious Operations of his whereby it is ſo, are generally deſpiſed. And they muſt live and die ſlaves unto Sin, by whom they are ſo. Wherefore a great part of our Wiſdom for the attaining and preſerving this Liberty, conſiſts in the acting of Faith on that promiſe of our Saviour, that our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him of him. When Sin in any Inſtance, by any Temptation, urgeth for Power and Rule in us, we are ready to turn into our ſelves and our own Reſolutions, which in their place are not to be neglected. But immediate crys unto God for ſuch ſupplies of his Spirit, as without which Sin will not be ſubdued, we ſhall find our beſt Relief. Bear it in mind, try it on the next Occaſion, and God will bleſs it with ſucceſs.

3*dly*. THE inſtrumental cauſe of this Freedom is the Duty of Believers themſelves, in and for the deſtruction of Sin. And this alſo manifeſts the importance of this Privilege. This is one of the principal Ends of all our religious Duties; of Prayer,

Prayer, of Faſting, of Meditation, of Watchfulneſs unto all other Duties of Obedience; they are all deſigned to prevent and ruine the Intereſt of Sin in us. We are called into a Theater to fight and contend, into a Field to be tried in a Warfare. Our Enemy is this Sin, which ſtrives and contends for the Rule over us. This we are to reſiſt even unto blood, that is, our utmoſt in doing and ſuffering. And certainly that is in it ſelf and unto us of the higheſt Importance, which on divine Appointment and Command, is the great End of the conſtant Endeavours of our whole lives.

Secondly, IT appears ſo to be from the conſideration of the Bondage which we are delivered from thereby. Bondage is that which humane nature is moſt averſe from, until it be debaſed and debauched by ſenſual Luſts. Men of ingenuous Spirits have in all Ages choſen rather to die than to be made ſlaves. But there is no ſuch Bondage as that which is under the Dominion of Sin. To be under the Power of baſe Luſts, as Covetouſneſs, Uncleanneſs, Drunkenneſs, Ambition, Pride and the like, to make Proviſion to fulfil their Deſires in the Wills of

of the Mind and the Fleſh, is the worſt of ſlavery.

BUT we may ſay what we pleaſe on this ſubject; none think themſelves ſo free, none make ſuch an Appearance of generous Freedom unto others, as thoſe who are avowed ſervants of Sin. If thoſe are not Freemen, who do what they pleaſe, and are for the moſt part approved in what they do, who puff at all their Enemies, and ſcorn ſuch as puſillanimous Slaves, who go not forth unto the ſame compaſs of exceſs with them, who ſhall be eſteemed free? They plead with the Phariſees that they are the only Freemen, and were never in Bondage to any. The ſervile reſtraints of Fear from divine Judgment and future Accounts they wholly deſpiſe. See the Deſcription, *Pſal.* lxxiij. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Who ſo free, ſo joyous as ſuch Perſons; as for others, *they are plagued all the day long, and are chaſtened every morning*, *v.* 14. Yea, they go heavily and mournfully under the oppreſſion of this Enemy, crying out continually for deliverance.

BUT the Truth inſiſted on is not at all impeached by this Obſervation. It is a great part of the ſlavery of ſuch Perſons, that

that they know not themſelves to be Slaves, and boaſt that they are free. They are born in a ſtate of Enmity againſt God, and Bondage under Sin, and they like well of it, as all abject Slaves do, under the worſt of Tyrants; they know no better. But true Liberty conſiſts in inward Peace, Tranquillity of Mind, Deſigns for and Inclinations unto the beſt things, the moſt noble Objects of our natural, rational Souls. All theſe they are utter Strangers unto, who ſpend their lives in the ſervice of vile and baſe Luſts. Envy not their Gallantry, their gliſtering appearances, their heaps of Wealth and Treaſures, they are in the whole vile and contemptible Slaves. The Apoſtle determines their Caſe, *Rom.* vi. 17. It is a matter of eternal thankfulneſs unto God, that we are delivered from being the Servants of Sin.

YEA, it is an Evidence of Grace, of a good frame of Spirit, when a ſoul is made really ſenſible of the excellency of this Freedom; when it ſo finds the Power and Intereſt of Sin to be weakned, as that it can rejoice in it, and be thankful to God for it, *Rom.* vii. 25.

Thirdly, IT is ſo, with reſpect unto the End of this Bondage, or what it brings Men

Men unto. If after all the baſe drudgery which ſinful Men are put unto in the ſervice of their Luſts, if after all the Conflicts which their Conſciences put them on with Fears and Terrors in the World, they could expect any thing of a future reward hereafter, ſomething might be ſpoke to alleviate their preſent Miſery. But *the Wages of Sin is Death*, eternal Death under the wrath of the great God, is all they are to look for. The End of the Dominion of Sin, is to give them up unto the Curſe of the Law, and Power of the Devil for evermore.

Fourthly. IT keeps Men off from the Participation of all real Good here and hereafter. What Men under the Power of Sin do enjoy, will quickly appear to be as a thing of nought. In the mean time, they have not the leaſt taſte of the Love of God, which alone takes out the Poiſon of their Enjoyments. They have not the leaſt view of the Glory of Chriſt, without which they live in perpetual darkneſs, like thoſe who never behold the light nor Sun. They have no Experience of the ſweetneſs and excellency of the gracious Influences of Life, and Strength, and Comfort from the Holy Ghoſt; nor

nor of that ſatisfaction and reward which is in holy Obedience; nor ſhall ever come to the Enjoyment of God. All theſe things and ſundry others of the like ſort might be inſiſted on and inlarged, to manifeſt the greatneſs of the Mercy and Privilege which is in a Freedom from the Dominion of Sin, as it is here propoſed by the *Apoſtle*. But the principal deſign I intended is accompliſhed, and I do but touch on theſe things.

I ſhall add One Obſervation more, and with it put a Cloſe to this Diſcourſe.

Ob. 2. IT is the great Intereſt of a Soul conflicting with the Power of Sin, to ſecure it ſelf againſt its Dominion; that it is not under its Dominion; not to have the Cauſe hang dubious in the Mind. To clear the truth hereof, we may obſerve the things that follow.

1. THE Conflict with Sin, making continual Repentance and Mortification abſolutely neceſſary will continue in us whilſt we are in this World. Pretences of Perfection here, are contrary to the Scriptures, contrary to the univerſal Experience of all Believers, and contrary to the Senſe and Conſcience of them by whom they are pleaded, as they make it evident every day. We pray againſt it, ſtrive againſt it, groan

groan for deliverance from it, and that, by the Grace of Chriſt healing our Nature, not without ſucceſs. Howbeit this ſucceſs extends not unto its abſolute Abolition whilſt we are in this World. It will abide in us until the union of the Soul and Body wherein it hath incorporated it ſelf, be diſſolved. This is our Lot and Portion; this is the conſequent of our Apoſtaſie from God, and the Depravation of our nature thereby.

YOU will ſay then, Whereto ſerves the Goſpel, and the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in this Caſe, if it be not able to give us deliverance herein? I anſwer, it doth give us a Fourfold Relief, which amounts virtually to a conſtant deliverance, though Sin will abide in us whilſt we are in this World.

1. IT is ſo ordered, that the continuance of Sin in us ſhall be the Ground, Reaſon, and Occaſion of the exerciſe of all Grace, and putting a luſtre on our Obedience. Some excellent Graces, as Repentance and Mortification could have no exerciſe if it were otherwiſe. And whilſt we are in this World, there is a beauty in them, that is an over-balance for the Evil of the Remainders of Sin: And the difficulty which

is

is hereby put on our Obedience, calling continually for the exerciſe and improvement of all Grace, renders it the more valuable. Herein lies the Spring of Humility, and ſelf-Reſignation to the Will of God. This makes us love and long for the Enjoyment of Chriſt, putting an excellency on his Mediation; whence the Apoſtle on the conſideration of it, falls into that Ejaculation; *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord, Rom.* vij. 25. This ſweetens unto us our future Reſt and Reward. Wherefore the continuance of us in this ſtate and condition in this World, a ſtate of ſpiritual Warfare, is beſt for us, and highly ſuited unto divine Wiſdom, conſidering the Office and Care of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt for our Relief. Let us not complain, or repine, or faint, but go on with Chriſtian Fortitude unto the End, and we ſhall have ſucceſs. For,

2. THERE are by the Grace of Chriſt, ſuch ſupplies and aids of ſpiritual Strength granted unto Believers, that Sin ſhall never proceed further in them than is uſeful and needful for the exerciſe of their Graces. It ſhall never have its Will upon them, nor Dominion over them, as we have before declared.

3. THERE is Mercy adminiſtred in and

by the Goſpel, for the Pardon of all that is Evil in it ſelf, or in any of its effects. *There is no Condemnation unto them that are in Chriſt Jeſus.* Pardoning Mercy, according to the Tenor of the Covenant, doth always diſarm this Sin in Believers of its condemning Power. So that notwithſtanding the utmoſt endeavours of it, *being juſtified by Faith, they have Peace with God.*

4. THERE is a ſeaſon, when by the Grace of Chriſt it ſhall be utterly aboliſhed; namely, at Death, when the courſe of our Obedience is finiſhed. Wherefore to affirm that this Sin, and conſequently a conflict with it, doth abide in Believers whilſt they are in this World, is no diſparagement unto the Grace of Chriſt, which gives ſuch a bleſſed deliverance from it.

Secondly, THERE is a double Conflict with and againſt Sin. The One is in thoſe that are unregenerate, conſiſting in the Rebellion of Light and Conſcience againſt the Rule of Sin, in many particular Inſtances. For although Sin be enthroned in the Will and Affections, yet the knowledge of good and evil in the Mind, excited by the hopes and fears of things eternal, will make head againſt it, as unto the performance of ſundry duties, and abſtinence from Sin. This con-

conflict may be where Sin is in the Throne, and may deceive themſelves, ſuppoſing it may be from the Rule of Grace, when it is only from the Rebellion of Light, and the charge of a Conſcience yet unſeared. But there is a conflict with Sin where Grace hath the Rule and is Enthroned. For although Grace have the Sovereignty in the Mind and Heart, yet the remainders of Sin, eſpecially in the corrupt Affections, will be continually rebelling againſt it. Now this we ſay is the Intereſt of all, namely, to enquire of what ſort and kind that conflict with Sin is, which is in them; if it be of the *firſt* ſort, they may yet be under the Dominion of Sin; if of the *latter*, they are freed from it. Wherefore whilſt the mind is dubious in this Caſe and undetermined, many evil conſequences it will be perplexed withal. I ſhall name ſome of them.

1. SUCH a ſoul can have no ſolid Peace, becauſe it hath not ſatisfaction what ſtate it doth belong unto.

2. IT cannot receive refreſhment by Goſpel Conſolations in any condition; for its juſt fears of the Dominion of Sin, will defeat them all.

3. IT will be dead and formal in all its

Duties, without ſpiritual Courage and delight; which will at length make it weary of them. So,

4. ALL Grace, eſpecially Faith, will be weakened and impaired under this Frame continually.

5. FEAR of Death will hold the Soul in Bondage; wherefore it is highly neceſſary to have this Caſe well ſtated and determined in our Minds; whereto if the foregoing Diſcourſes may contribute any thing, it is what was deſigned in them.

THERE remains only to give ſome few Directions, how the prevalency of Sin unto ſuch a Degree, as to render the Caſe about its Rule dubious in the Mind, may be obviated and prevented. Some few of the many that might be given, I ſhall propoſe.

1. THE great Rule of preventing the encreaſe and power of vitious Habits; is, Watch againſt Beginnings. Sin doth not attempt Dominion but in particular Inſtances, by one eſpecial Luſt or another. Wherefore, if any Sin or corrupt Luſt begin as it were to ſet up for a peculiar Predominancy, or Intereſt in the Mind and Affections; if it be not entertained with ſevere Mortification, it will ruine the Peace, if not endanger the ſafety of the Soul. And when this is ſo,

ſo, it may eaſily be diſcovered by any one who keepeth a diligent watch over his Heart and Ways. For no Sin doth ſo entirely advance it ſelf in the Mind and Affections, but it is promoted therein either by Mens natural Inclinations, or by their circumſtances in occaſions of Life, or by ſome Temptation which they have expoſed themſelves unto, or by ſome ſuch neglect wherein the frequency of Acts have ſtrengthened vitious Inclinations. But theſe things may be eaſily diſcerned by thoſe who are in any meaſure awake unto their Soul's Concernments.

THE ſtrict charge given us by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to watch, and that of the Wiſe Man, above all keepings to keep our hearts, have eſpecial regard unto thoſe beginnings of Sin's obtaining Power in us. So ſoon as a Diſcovery is made of its coincidence or conjunction, with any of thoſe ways of the promotion of its Power, if it be not oppoſed with ſevere and diligent Mortification, it will proceed in the method declared, *James* i. 14, 15.

THOSE who would be wiſe, muſt familiarize Wiſdom unto their minds, by a continual free Converſe with it. They muſt ſay unto Wiſdom, Thou art my Siſter, and

and call Underſtanding, thy Kinſwoman, *Prov.* vij. 4. So will Wiſdom have Power in and over their Minds. And if we ſuffer Sin by any of the Advantages mentioned, to familiarize it ſelf into our minds; if we ſay not unto it, Get thee hence upon the firſt appearance of its activity for Power in us, it will put hard for the Throne.

2. CAREFULLY enquire and try whether ſuch things which you may do or approve of in your ſelves, do not promote the Power of Sin, and help on its Rule in you. This Method *David* preſcribes, *Pſal.* xix. 12. Secret Sins, ſuch as are not known to be Sins, it may be to our ſelves, make way for thoſe that are preſumptuous. Thus Pride may ſeem to be nothing but a Frame of Mind belonging unto our Wealth and Dignity, or our Parts and Abilities; ſenſuality may ſeem to be but a lawful Participation of the good things of this Life; Paſſion and Peeviſhneſs, but a due ſence of the want of that reſpect which we ſuppoſe due unto us; Covetouſneſs a neceſſary care of our ſelves and our Families. If the Seeds of Sin are covered with ſuch Pretences, they will in time ſpring up and bear bitter Fruit in the Minds and lives of Men. And the beginnings of all Apoſtaſie both in Religion and

and Morality, lie in ſuch Pretences. Men plead they can do ſo and ſo lawfully, until they can do things openly unlawful.

3. KEEP your Hearts always tender under the Word. This is the true and only ſtate of inconſiſtency with, and repugnancy to the Rule of Sin. The loſs hereof, or a decay herein, is that which hath opened the Flood-Gates of Sin amongſt us. Where this Frame is, a conſciencious Fear of Sinning will always prevail in the Soul; where it is loſt, Men will be bold in all ſorts of Follies. And that this Frame may be preſerved, it is required, (1.) That we caſt out all vicious Habits of Mind that are contrary unto it, *James* i. 21. (2.) That we preſerve an Experience of its Power and Efficacy on our Souls, 1 *Pet.* ij. 1, 2, 3. (3.) That we lay aſide all Prejudices againſt thoſe that diſpence it, *Gal.* iv. 16. (4.) To keep the Heart always humble, in which Frame alone it is teachable, *Pſal.* xxv. Every thing in the preaching of the Word comes croſs and unpleaſing to the Minds of Proud Men. (5.) Pray for a Bleſſing on the Miniſtry, which is the beſt preparation for receiving benefit by it.

4. ABHORR that Peace of Mind which is conſiſtent with any known Sin. Men

Men may have frequent ſurprizals into known Sins; but if, whilſt it is ſo with them, they refuſe all inward Peace, but what comes in by moſt fervent and ſincere deſires of deliverance from them, and Repentance for them, they may be ſafe from the Dominion of Sin. But if Men can on any Hopes, or Preſumptions, or Reſolutions preſerve a kind of Peace in their Minds, whilſt they live in any known Sin; they are nigh the Borders of that ſecurity, which is the Territory wherein Sin doth reign.

5. MAKE continual Applications unto the Lord Chriſt in all the Acts of his Mediation for the Ruine of Sin, eſpecially when it attempts a Dominion in us, *Heb.* iv. 16. This is the Life and Soul of all Directions in this Caſe, which needs not here to be enlarged on; it is frequently ſpoken unto.

Laſtly, REMEMBER, that a due ſence of Deliverance from the Dominion of Sin, is the moſt effectual Motive unto univerſal Obedience and Holineſs; as ſuch it is propoſed and managed by the *Apoſtle*, *Rom.* vi.

FINIS.